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Premiere issue

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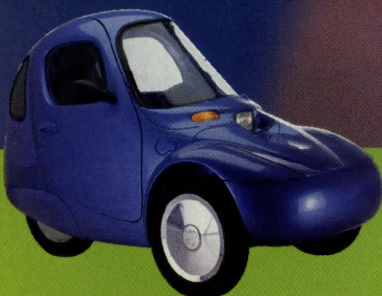
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74 **Natasha Henstridge**

Demure and street smart, with no qualms about the choices she has made. Steamy and elegantly graceful, with a physical beauty that could melt lead. *Species* star Natasha Henstridge embodies a Hollywood style that has movie buffs nostalgic for the glamour girls of the past.

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58 **When you need somebody...**

Electronic commerce is changing the way people shop and do business, but sometimes you really miss those clerks at the mall. The good news: the clerks are showing up online.

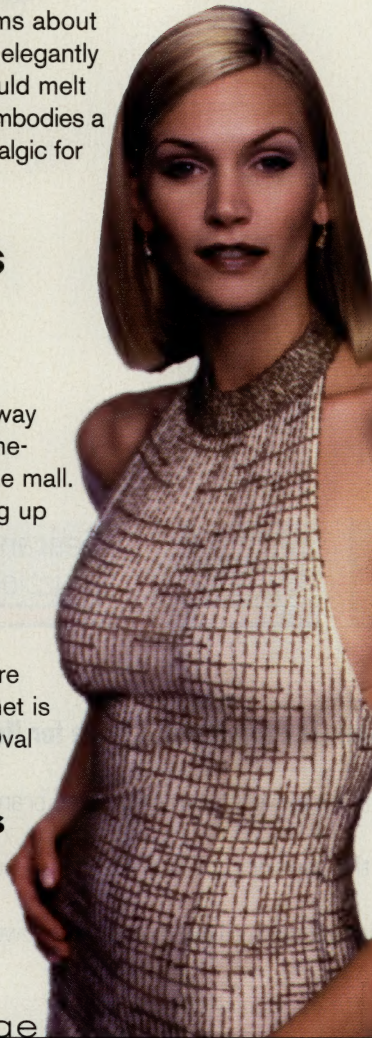
66 **Webmasters on the campaign trail**

Though many candidates' Web sites are still astoundingly amateurish, the Internet is the newest player in the race for the Oval Office.

86 **Masked and mysterious**

In a world of online pseudonyms and anonymity, you have to be careful when you talk to strangers. Reality can take some unusual turns when people meet online.

Natasha Henstridge



theedge

Our experts escort you around the big wide wonderful Web.

6 **From the editor**

Executive editor Kevin Isaacson and eBay CEO Meg Whitman welcome you to *eBay Magazine*.

32 **Travel**

Reva Basch: The Internet's reach puts you in direct touch with destinations around the globe.

34 **Investing**

Selena Maranjian: With the advent of the Internet, there's no reason you can't beat Wall Street at its own game.

36 **Financial**

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38 **Net**

John C. Dvorak: A number of reasons why the auction scene as it exists today will not be around much longer.

40 **Tech**

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42 **Surfing**

Mike Neumeier: If search engines index only a sixth of the Web, how are you supposed to find what you want?

110 **Collectibles**

Daisy Cain: To turn a profit while collecting, pick up what others toss to the wayside.

auctionedge

98 **Hunting the online sniper**

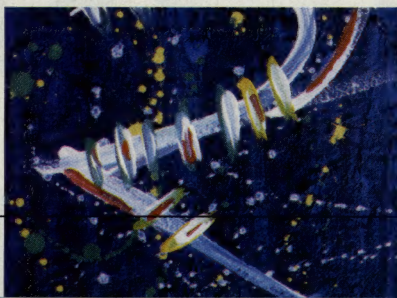
You sure as heck can't beat 'em, so online auction enthusiasts might as well start working on their aim.

112 **Trends**

Get a feel for the hottest collecting fields; from pricing to what's coming up next in Beanies, sports, first edition books and more.

118 **Bids and pieces**

The shirt off Gilligan's back; Baggage of the stars; The Misfits in miniature; The art of Alanis Morissette; Mia Hamm kicks down the collecting competition; What Patrick Ewing won't give you



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Onsite**Insight**

10 Quick hits

Adam Sandler hums a tune; Atari 2600 returns from the brink; Yellow Submarine sails into re-release; Shania Twain gets a new job; Mr. Whipple makes a comeback.

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28 Killing your VCR

A number of very compelling reasons to reconsider the way you currently watch TV.

44 Tech toys

Ten fun gadgets you never knew you needed ... until now.

48 Cartoons in the carpool lane

These little cuties never need any gasoline, and they fit nicely in motorcycle parking places.

52 MP3: Get up for the download

When you dance to the music, somebody has to pay the piper. Don't they?

82 Software for babies

Parents get some high-tech help, but should very small kids be dealing with computers?

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62 Barbie: personalized permutations

The world's favorite tiny plastic female flounces onto the Internet. Mattel's My Design gives her a good reason to get all dolled up.



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72 Barbecue, retro-style

Wrap up the last summer of the millennium with a mess o' food and a vintage shindig.

92 Tunesmith auctions services for a song

Smithereens frontman Pat DiNizio will collaborate—or Psycholaborate—with any and all aspiring songwriters. He kicks off the jam with an auction.

94 America's Hideaways

With a little help from the Internet, you can forget you missed the vacation. This month: The Midwest's Cape Cod.

108 Atlantique City

Marilyn's brassiere in *Some Like it Hot*? The Bambino's stadium locker key for the House that Ruth Built? Is your wallet handy?



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126 A Beanie bares all

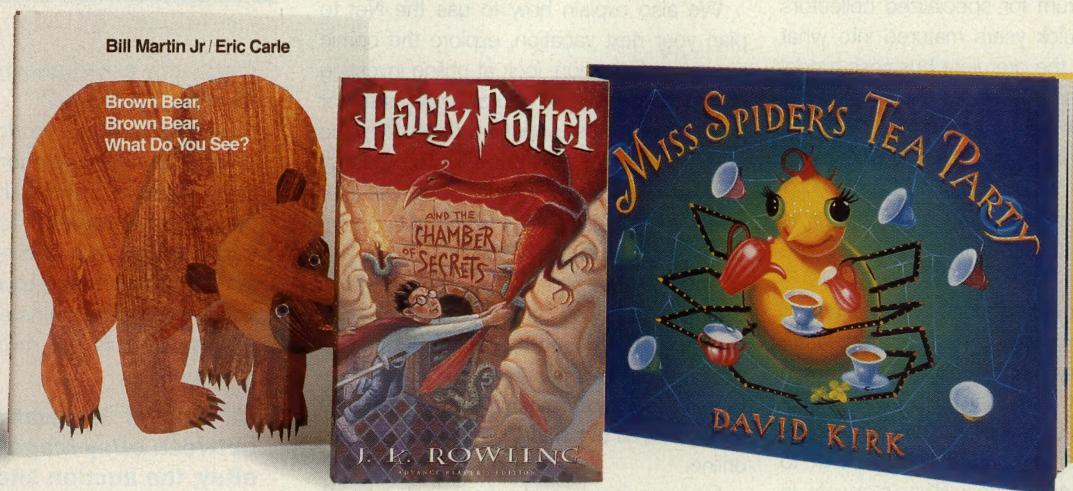
Ursus legumus au naturale. Stuffing, beans, birthday suit, bare facts—it's the whole enchilada.

Back of the book

128 Grudge Match

Heaven vs. Hell; Bart vs. O.J.; Al Gore vs. Mr. Potato Head; Cindy Crawford vs. Claudia Schiffer. For the vanquished and the unvanquished, flip to the back page.

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Kevin Isaacson, Executive Editor

Let's do word association, okay?

Mark McGwire? Baseball player.

Demi Moore? Actress.

eBay? A place to bid on Barbie dolls and Beanie Babies.

These answers are right – but incomplete.

McGwire is a dedicated dad and leading activist against child abuse. Moore is an emerging entertainment power broker who has been central in developing the Austin Powers franchise.

And eBay?

Rampant sales of Beanies and Barbies don't even begin to communicate the power of eBay. What began as a trading and communication forum for specialized collectors has in four quick years matured into what some view as the premiere business model for the next millennium. At this writing, the Web site offers more than 2.5 million items in 1,637 categories – including 75,000 beanbag toys and 11,000 Barbie dolls.

Behind the millions of auctions, though, is a much more compelling story: eBay's people.

Like any enduring entity, eBay's critical asset is its community of e-commerce enthusiasts. Certainly, many of eBay's most active participants list collecting as a core interest – but to dismiss the site as an "online flea market," as some pundits have, is akin to describing Cher as Sonny Bono's ex-wife. In truth, eBay's 5.8 million registered users are linked far beyond figurines and sports cards. Their interest in emerging technologies and willingness to spend money online underscores an educated, affluent demographic that is invigorated by all things trendy and emerging.

Enter *eBay Magazine*.

This debut issue of *eBay Magazine* targets the diverse interests and enthusiast pursuits of eBay's community. Using e-commerce as a framework, we've prepared a utility-filled assortment of trend-based stories that will

appeal to Internet newcomers as well as e-commerce veterans. A sampling:

- **Your new VCR?** "Personal TV" is a computerized addition to your TV that allows consumers to essentially create "channels" of what they love best. (Just think: You can have "all Gilligan, all the time" if you want.)

- **Online customer service.** When you and your computer hit that inevitable dead end, wouldn't it be nice to have somebody to talk to? Leading online companies are pursuing real-people, real-time customer support.

- **The 2000 election.** Can the Internet do for Al Gore what MTV did for Bill Clinton eight years ago? Learn about the Internet's impact on the race for the Oval Office.

- **Snipe to succeed.** We'll help you peer inside the minds of veteran online auction enthusiasts who utilize controversial "snipe bids" to snare last-second bargains.

We also explain how to use the Net to plan your next vacation, explore the comic sensation Pokémon, look at online investing options and check on autograph prices for pro football's most popular rookies. We also offer news flashes on Eric Clapton (a landmark guitar auction), Heather Locklear (her new TV home) and soccer star Mia Hamm (her autographed jersey sells for \$350).

And, yes, we've included fun stories on Beanie Babies and Barbies, too.

This debut issue of *eBay Magazine* explores dozens of emerging trends and provides detailed information on more than 100 Web sites, all targeted to enhance your time online.

So jump inside and take a look around. We're confident you'll like what you see – and if you have an idea that will make *eBay Magazine* even better, please let us know.

I'll be checking my e-mail.

Kevin Isaacson
Executive Editor
ebaymag@krause.com



The two faces of *eBay Magazine*

Actress Natasha Henstridge is featured on two versions of *eBay Magazine*'s debut cover. At left is the national distribution version. A special subscriber version (right) was mailed to everyone who subscribed in advance of first-issue press time. The special version features an individual number as well as a facsimile Henstridge autograph.

FAQ

(frequently asked questions)

Q. What is eBay?

A. eBay.com is the world's largest person-to-person auction site. It's also an online community where people come together to chat, trade tips and buy and sell items ranging from vintage toys and antiques to electronics and computers, in nearly one million auctions per day.

Q. What is the relationship between *eBay Magazine* and eBay, the auction site?

A. The magazine is produced through a partnership between eBay, the online auction pioneer, and Krause Publications, the world's largest publisher of enthusiast magazines and books. eBay staff members actively participate in promotion and marketing efforts, but the magazine is editorially independent.

Q. How can I subscribe?

A. Reach us online at www.krause.com or by calling toll-free 888-486-5478.

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welcome

Dear eBay Magazine Reader,

Welcome to the premiere issue of eBay Magazine and the eBay community! Whether you are an avid eBay user, a collecting enthusiast or just interested in the latest news on hot happenings in the online auction world, you've come to the right place.

All of us at eBay are excited about presenting a magazine that celebrates the spirit and passion of collecting. Each month, eBay Magazine will provide the latest news in collectibles, e-commerce and person-to-person trading. It is a magazine that gives you a peek at the latest trends, pop culture and the Internet — whether it is your hobby or your business! And of course, you'll find those heart-warming, one-of-a-kind stories that are as unique to the eBay community as lunchboxes, daguerreotypes and antique locket.

We are proud to join with Krause Publications for the launch of eBay Magazine. Krause is the world's largest hobby publisher with years of experience representing the voice of the collecting community. We want to thank Krause for their invaluable contribution in publishing a magazine that enriches the existing eBay community while welcoming a new audience to the experience.



And, we want to thank you, our community, for your support and interest in sharing your stories, opinions and insight that will help drive the direction and success of eBay Magazine!

Sincerely,

Meg Whitman

Meg Whitman
 eBay, President & CEO
 Collecting Enthusiast

cover credits

Photography by **Fergus Greer**. Stylist: **Fati Parsia** Rex Agency 323-871-9136. Hair and Makeup: **Martin Pretorius** for Cloutier **Pg. 74:** A) Blue criss-cross top and matching blue capri pants by Herve Leger, Paris. **Pg. 2:** A) Gold beaded on creme background, halter-neck dress by Herve Leger, Paris. B) Gold and diamond earrings and diamond ring on right hand by Asprey & Garrard of London. **Pg. 78:** A) Nude long dress by Herve Leger, Paris B) Gold and diamond cross by Asprey & Garrard of London. **Pg. 77:** A) Black dress by Emanuel Ungaro, Paris. B) Diamond bracelet and ring on right hand by Asprey & Garrard of London. Shot on location July 23, 1999 at **Marz Studios**, Los Angeles, CA 232-466-8031

eBay Magazine

(ISSN: 1524-7791) is published monthly for \$19.99 per year at Iola, WI, by Krause Publications, Inc. Editorial, advertising and circulation offices are located at 700 E. State St., Iola, WI, 54990-0001, phone 715-445-2214. Periodicals postage pending at Iola, WI, 54990, and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to eBay Magazine, 700 E. State St., Iola, WI, 54990. To ensure prompt service when contacting us with an address change or other inquiry concerning your subscription, please include the mailing label from a recent issue. Mail all subscription inquiries to eBay Magazine Circulation Department, 700 E. State St., Iola, WI, 54990-0001 **ISSN: 1524-7791** Volume 1, issue 1. The eBay Magazine logo is protected through trademark registration in the United States. U.S. subscription rate is \$19.99 per year (12 issues). Copyright 1999 by Krause Publications, Inc. Printed in the U.S.A.

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onsite insight

Featured this month:

Heather Locklear's new TV address ... buying and selling a piece of Jennifer Lopez or Jim Carrey ... Shania Twain does the obvious ... catching up with Adam Sandler ... appraising the velvet Elvis ... the Lone Ranger's 50th anniversary ... the wonder of Sarah McLachlan ... shop and do a good deed ... talk on the Net and more ...

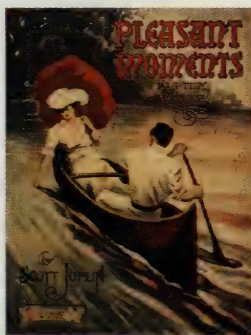
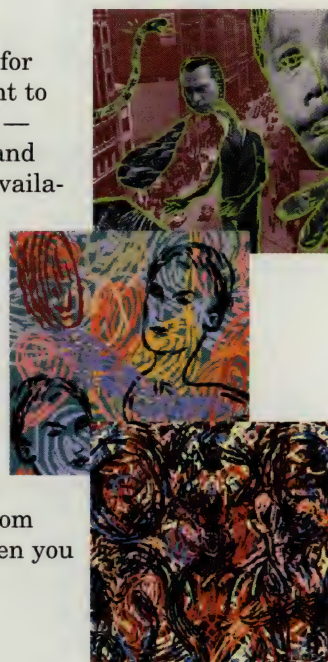


From good to bad to downright naughty

Heather Locklear has reason to celebrate: she has a birthday on September 25th, and a new role as the mayor's campaign manager on ABC's *Spin City*. Locklear can really cause a stir when she comes to town – remember her stint as bitchy Sammy Jo on *Dynasty*? What about as Amanda on *Melrose Place*? In the distant past is her sweetie-pie role as Officer Stacy Sheridan from *TJ Hooker*. Autographed color photos of the California native run from \$20-\$100 with COA. We can't wait to see the look on Stuart's face when this siren walks into the office.

So big, it's HUGE

Need a little art in your life? Do others seek you out for your “unique way of looking at things?” You may want to click over to one of the handsomest e-zines out there — *Huge Magazine*. Calling itself the Superchunky Art and Leisure Magazine, www.hugemagazine.com is only available online, where it's updated weekly. Publisher David Bailey says the mag's philosophy is simple — “*Huge* looks at the world through the eyes of a BIG kid — slightly silly, but with an appreciation of the weird and wonderful.” See if you don't agree. You'll find plenty of eye candy and excellent site design without all those boring columns of words that you may find at other sites. Load up on free desktop patterns, pictures and file icons Bailey refers to as “little ‘souvenirs’ of the whole *Huge* Experience.” On your way out have a dream analyzed or get advice from the swami. Definitely a site for one of those days when you need a little dada. www.hugemagazine.com



Ragged but right

Before Elvis, before the Fab Four, Zep and the rest of the platinum horde, there was a shy, intense piano player in Sedalia, Mo., named Scott Joplin. One hundred years ago on Sept. 18, Joplin's *Maple Leaf Rag* was published by John Stark in Sedalia. The *Maple Leaf* single-handedly established an entire musical genre, kick-started the awakening behemoth later known as jazz, and became the first million seller in the history of music. The original 1899 version is consequently among the holiest of grails for collectors of American sheet music. Of the two or three copies extant, one is the dog-eared copy at the Library of Congress. Other Joplin sheet music is more common; an original version of the 1902 rag “Elite Syncopations” brought \$306 in an auction on eBay this summer, and the 1908 piece “Fig Leaf Rag” sold for \$275. So, what if an original copy of the *Maple Leaf Rag* suddenly turned up on the market? Sheet music seller Joel Markowitz said if he were running the auction, “I'd start the bids at \$10,000, but I would expect to make a *whole* lot more than that.” Go through a virtual warehouse of glad-rags at www.sheetmusiccenter.com.



It's a bug's life

Everything old really is new again. The VW Bug has been back on the road for a couple of years, and it's proving to be one of the most desired cars around. With the popularity of the Bug (as well as all VWs), it isn't surprising that collecting die-cast VWs is one of the hottest toy-car collecting areas. A first edition VW Bus by Hot Wheels recently auctioned for \$51.25. Matchbox has issued several versions of the new VW Bug, and these cars are being grabbed up as soon as they're put on the toy shelves. Catch the latest at www.matchbox.com.

Scooby-Doo, where are you?

Zoinks! There's no hotter cartoon character than Scooby-Doo. During the cartoon's heyday (1960s-80s), few toys were produced. Today Scooby-Doo is everywhere, and on everything. Find a bobbing head figurine for \$10.49 or check out a lunchbox, which sells in the \$75 range. Vintage Scooby items are reasonably affordable right now; look for them to graduate in value in the coming years. For the new stuff, visit the Warner Bros. Studio Store online at www.warnerbros.com.



Yearbooks of the rich and famous

You don't need to be a straight-A student to figure out that if you went to school with anyone who became famous, you can cash in now. Here are some famous celebs and the prices their school yearbooks have been fetching:

- **Kurt Cobain**, Sylvan High School, 1982: \$300
- **Cameron Diaz**, Hughes Junior High, Long Beach, Calif., with signature, 1987: \$1,000
- **Patti Hearst**, Marymount Junior School, Bel Air, Calif., 1961: \$250
- **Traci Lords** (real name is Nora Kuzma), Redondo Union High School, 1983: \$500
- **Marilyn Manson** (real name is Brian Warner), Glen Oak High School, Canton, Ohio, 1987: \$300
- **Jim Morrison**, George Washington High School, Alexandria, Va., 1961: \$500-\$750
- **Walter Payton**, Columbia MS High School, 1971: \$450
- **Janet Reno**, Harvard Law School Yearbook, 1963: \$70
- **Eudora Welty**, Jackson High School, MS, 1923-1924: \$700
- **Robin Yount**, Taft High School, Woodland Hills, Calif., 1971: \$125



Yak Yak Yak

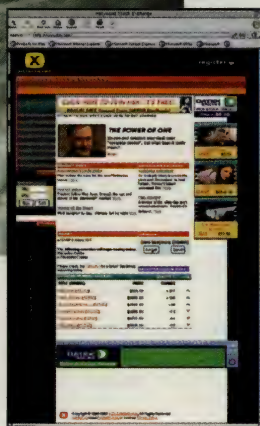
A site that will help both broadcasters produce programs and listeners find them, Give Me Talk promises to give everyone a voice – no matter what the topic. Dan Peterson, VP of Strategy and Sales at Give Me Talk, says the site provides “all the resources a broadcaster will need to be successful.” Well, except for content. Peterson adds, “Lots of people edit a newsletter or broadcast on local outlets. We will give them access to a much larger audience.” And will it be easy to use for the novice or intermediate PC user? “The production is all done on the broadcaster's PC, enabling them to put segments together using a drag and drop format. Our site converts it to Real Audio files for listening.” Access programs using your Real Audio player, G2 or better. There's already quite a buzz surrounding this site. Or maybe that's the sound of one thousand talk shows launching ... Expect entertainment, controversy, and purely weird stuff from this site. The launch will move in two stages, with full rollout planned for early next year. Be sure you stay tuned to www.givemetalk.com.

“He was, like, our dad.” – Dweezil Zappa's answer to the question “What was it like growing up with Frank as a father?” on www.lycos.com/chat/



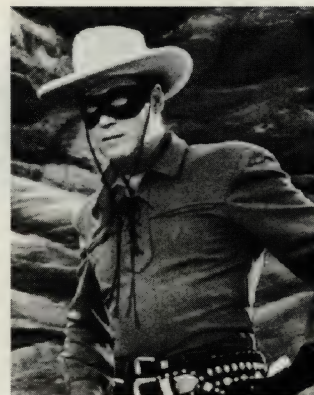
Fantasy Football, Hollywood-style

Got a gut feeling about the next Jim Carrey flick? Think Angelina Jolie has only started to charm Hollywood? Test your instincts at www.hsx.com. The Hollywood Stock Exchange is an oasis for those driven by stardom rather than draft picks. Form a league with your friends or co-workers and monitor each other's progress while predicting the next movie blockbusters. The Hollywood Stock Exchange works just like the "real" stock exchange except the money is Hollywood Dollars, and you trade MovieStocks or StarBonds. Register free and start off with a cool two mil. Buy a stake in Will Smith or Jenna Elfman. Set yourself up in a fund, like the Sony Studio Index Fund. Do some research or hit the chat room for a little volatile gossip. Check the boards for the week-to-date to lifetime ranks among all players. This is a detailed, informative and therefore absorbing site — don't be surprised if you get caught up in the trading, or start firing off e-mails to your league touting the talents of the latest Hollywood hunk. While the site touts itself as a way to track public tastes, it's great entertainment for those Monday nights when your significant other is glued to the tube. It's all in fun on hsx.com, but you can cash out your winnings for prizes at the Reward Center. Try doing that after a 38-yard field goal.



Let's get small

A longtime hit all over the world but never released on these shores — it's Kinder Surprise. A 3-inch foil wrapped chocolate egg holds a smaller, plastic egg; inside you'll find a handpainted figurine, a puzzle, or a tiny toy. Eat the chocolate and marvel at the instruction page in eight languages. Special edition "maxi" eggs feature full-size stuffed animals or puppets. People of all ages swap duplicates over the Web and there's a small but growing presence on eBay. Peanuts figures run up to \$50, with other toy sets topping out at around \$10. Cases of unopened eggs sell for \$20 and up. They are cheap, hip collectibles that take up less than an inch of display space. Look for the eggs in European airports, newsstands, and grocery stores.

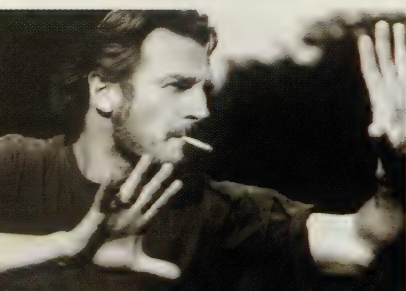


Hey, kemo sabe ...

September marks the 50th anniversary of the Lone Ranger's debut on television. The plots were basic and universal, concerning the battle of good vs. evil nestled against painted backdrops of the lonesome prairie. Recent auctions have seen prices pushed up to \$300 for a holster, gun and bullets in excellent condition. Certainly not kid stuff.

Antiques, direct to you

Too rainy to hit your usual Saturday morning antiques route? Search through the listings at The Internet Antique Shop by item, or pull up a specific vendor and search their online inventory. Find your item, click, and buy. Many of the vendors are hooked together by banner ad, so the feeling is much like moving from one vendor to another in a traditional antique store. Well, except that there aren't lines of people waiting to put their fingerprints on the Depression glass. www.tias.com



"As actors we are part of a luxurious Persian carpet. We are all part of the stitching, and I love being a team player."

— Liam Neeson, discussing *The Phantom Menace* on www.starwars.talkcity.com/

**It works because
it was built from the Internet up.
Not from a bureaucracy down.**



While traditional banks trundle online with the same old thinking, we're harnessing the power of the Internet to give you new financial power. Like loan answers in 51 seconds. Electronic bill pay. Even a credit card that saves 5% at leading web merchants. Someone has to lead banking in a new direction. Why not you?



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Mmm ... if they could just find a way to fax it over

Oh sure, you've heard it all before ... pizzas to gourmet dinners delivered hot to your door via modem request. It's getting closer to reality. If you reside in one of **www.food.com's** 12 cities — Chicago, Houston, and Seattle, among others — you can order delivery or takeout online from restaurants in your area. Expect roll-out to your neighborhood to take longer than 30 minutes or less.

A model, too!

You can't buy tickets to Shania Twain's latest gig. The superstar songstress is glamming it up for the latest Revlon ColorStay launch. A signed lipstick tube may make a unique collectible; Twain's autograph values are hot in the \$100 and up range. Is there a cap to this market in sight?

Shania Twain ©1999 PRN



Fun buns

Have a fling with a '60s-style Playboy Bunny as this, the year of the rabbit, comes to a close. Modern Icons of Tenafly, N.J. has made it possible, re-creating the classic figure in cold-cast porcelain to commemorate *Playboy* magazine's 45th anniversary. The 17-1/2-inch piece is limited to orders received in 1999, so let this serve as last call. It's available for \$300 at **www.modernicons.com**, and also at **www.playboy.com**. The latter offers five other collectibles to celebrate the magazine's anniversary, including a Zippo lighter (\$28) and a Titan motorcycle — one hundred of them exist, adorned with Marilyn Monroe's silhouette. If you can spare \$39,000, it'll be the perfect vehicle for a quick exit from the office once you plan that end-of-the-summer tryst.



??\$??\$??\$

How much are those *Playboy* back issues really worth?

Urban legend states an interesting dichotomy: a man could put his kids through college just by selling off his collection of *Playboy* magazines. The other side: back issues are nearly worthless due to availability from the source. The reality is somewhere closer to the middle. An average single from the '60s or '70s may get \$10-\$15 at auction; a complete set from a number of years will net more. Most issues from the '50s are worth \$50 or less, except for the first two — in perfect shape they can fetch up to \$3,500. Autographs from the Playmates add value, as do autographs from the stars featured inside. Keep in mind you can order every issue back to 1966 at **www.playboy.com**.



"It's here somewhere."



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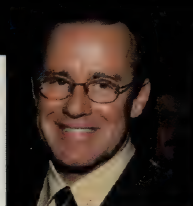
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Get ready for "The Chanukah Song, Part Two"

Adam Sandler shoots to score with his fourth album, *Stan and Judy's Kid*.

Due out Sept. 2, the album features the songs and skits we've grown to expect from the "Lunchlady Land" crooner. Speaking of crooning, Sandler offers up "She Comes Home to Me" backed by Frank Sinatra's big band and recorded in Capitol Studio A, where Ol' Blue Eyes himself cranked out many a hit. Sandler's continuing popularity stacks up nicely against his *SNL* alums when it comes to autograph values. A price summary:

- Adam Sandler:** \$28 to \$59 (signed color photos)
- Mike Myers and Dana Carvey as Wayne and Garth:** \$49.95 (signed color photo)
- David Spade:** \$60 (signed black and white)
- Chris Farley:** \$20.52 (signed photo)
- Mike Myers as Austin Powers:** \$35 (signed photo)
- Eddie Murphy:** (\$10 and up for signed photos, CDs, or movies)
- Julia Louis-Dreyfus:** (\$10.50 for a photo, less for signed *TV Guides*)
- John Belushi and Dan Aykroyd as the Blues Brothers:** (\$510, two autographed cards framed with photo)
- Phil Hartman:** \$53.22 (signed color photo)

That's entertainment

You never know if you're talking with someone who's had their Equity card for 30 years, a make-up artist who's working on Robin Williams's latest movie or a 15-year-old who's seen *Phantom Menace* nine times, but that's the beauty of "All That Chat" on the Talkin' Broadway site. Users post everything from reviews to backstage interviews with the stars. You can also find links to other entertainment-related sites where you can discover things like rare Judy Garland recordings available in MP3 format. Whether you're a casual theater-goer or dream of starring on Broadway, drop by All That Chat and see what everyone's talking about.

www.talkinbroadway.com/forum/

Weird and wonderful

Recently spotted auction items that hit a little left of center, and their prices:

- Kreskin's ESP board game in which you can supposedly predict the future
\$11.50
- A stapler that looks like a frog
\$6
- Three packs of trading cards, *The Bionic Woman*
\$9.99
- Vintage Pisces necktie
\$6
- His & Hers Shrunken Heads
\$50

"I've had great leading men. Alec Baldwin is so brilliantly funny; he'll make you pee in your pants."

— Jennifer Jason Leigh, discussing her onscreen counterparts on www.bigstar.com/chat

Photo: Daniela Federici - Visages

Now online: The world's greatest collections

Want to sneak a peak inside one of the world's great auction houses? Visitors to eBay will have that opportunity beginning in October through a new "Great Collections" category. Through its acquisition of San Francisco-based Butterfield & Butterfield and partnerships with leading auction houses in France, Austria, Australia and Switzerland, eBay will offer virtual tours of high-profile items — and, of course, a chance to bid. Great Collections will debut with a few thousand items ranging in price from \$250 to \$100,000 or more. Steve Westly, eBay's VP/marketing and business development, said users may be surprised by the relative affordability. "We all hear about the \$50,000 marquee item, but we've found that most items sell for less than \$1,000," said Westly. An added benefit: Expanding the base of high-end auction enthusiasts. "An auction house can be a little intimidating," Westly said. "People wonder, 'Do I have to wear a suit to get in?' 'If I sneeze, have I just bid \$50,000?' Now people will have the comfort of browsing online ... and I truly think they'll be fascinated by what they see." Great

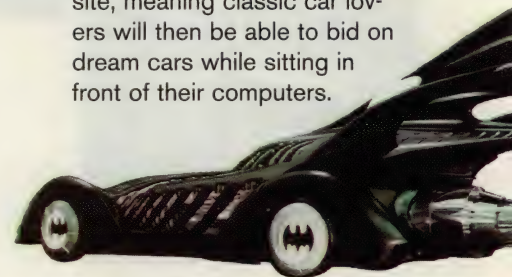


A Louis XVI-style giltwood console offered by Butterfield & Butterfield.

Collections will also feature items sold by leading U.S. auction houses and pre-approved dealers. All items listed will be authenticated, and will include a 100 percent guarantee. "If you're buying a \$5,000 item that is supposed to be French antique, you'll probably want it to be authenticated. Through the people at Butterfield's as well as our international partnerships, we're bringing in literally hundreds of the world's best-known experts to accomplish just that."

Need wheels? Buy the Batmobile

The seller of the Batmobile and the Popemobile is at it again. The Batmobile from the movie *Batman Forever* is going back on the block during Kruse's 29th Annual Auburn Auction, held Sept. 1-7 in Auburn, Ind. Three years ago at the classic car extravaganza, the Pope's 1975 Ford Escort sold for \$102,000, with proceeds going to benefit the Polish Orphanage. This year, the Batcycle from the television series from the 1950s and '60s, Michael Jordan's limo and Jerry Lewis's car also are among the vehicles making bidders drool at what is certainly one of the premiere events for collector car enthusiasts. Next up for Kruse: A strong presence on the eBay site, meaning classic car lovers will then be able to bid on dream cars while sitting in front of their computers.



music

Coming soon ... As seen on a monitor near you

Thanks to the folks at www.MusicSpace.com, there is no reason to stay up late, losing sleep and watching *Planet of the Apes* movies just to buy those great CDs and tapes that are always being advertised as "Only available thru this TV offer." MusicSpace is a one-click clearinghouse for the CDs that you want in your collection but might be a little too embarrassed to buy in your local record store ... "Monsters of Rock," "Totally '80s" or "Hall & Oates Greatest Hits," anyone? The MusicSpace site features a veritable smorgasbord of greatest hits and themed compilations that until now have been unavailable from traditional music outlets or even online retailers like Amazon or CDNow. The only way to get these releases is through MusicSpace or by sitting through a lot of Sally Struthers

commercials. The site is organized by decade, with releases from the '60s (Viva Las Vegas), '70s (Those Fabulous '70s), '80s (Totally '80s) and '90s (Pop Life). There is also a miscellaneous category, including titles as diverse as The Rolling Stone "Women In Rock" Collection, Hollywood's Greatest Hits (movie themes) and Sugarbeats (music for kids). A "Party Favors" section features ideas for all kinds of theme parties and, of course, a list of pertinent musical selections available through the site. A frequent buyer program is in the works, where registered customers will earn points toward free CDs by shopping on the site. As we went to press the site was still in prototype; keep your ears peeled for its grand opening. Get your groove on and no one will have to know.





your raincoat

Vintage condom tins from the 1930s-1950s have become the ultimate nostalgia item. Names like Golden Pheasant, Trojan, Ultrex, Three Merry Widows, Peacocks, Radium Nutex, Three Knights, Silver-Tex and Shadows can sell from \$20 to more than \$300. An ultra-rare "Aristocrat" Condom Tin sold recently for a staggering \$735.



Shaken, not stirred

Elegant 1920s and 1930s art deco-style cocktail shakers are bringing cool prices at auction. Shakers by makers such as Chase, Napier and Manning-Bowman are selling for hundreds of dollars. For those of you with distinct tastes, a 12-inch, chrome-plated Zeppelin cocktail shaker from Germany sold for more than \$2,800. And you thought drinks were getting expensive!



The Elvis Files: Black velvet

You might laugh, but Elvis Presley black velvet paintings are selling big. They routinely go for \$45 and up on eBay. The "Aloha Elvis" in excellent shape recently saw a price of over \$150. What separates a good Elvis painting from a great one? See below.

1. Is it signed by the artist? A signature indicates someone took time with this painting, rather than just stenciling it in the trunk of the car in the parking lot where they sold it.
2. How big is the painting? Bigger is better as long as quality is not sacrificed. Full body shots are rare.
3. Is Elvis crying? Crying is great.
4. Are there real rhinestones, feathers, or glitter on his outfit? Such glued on additions make the piece more valuable.
5. Is it an original or is it a stencil? Look closely and you should be able to tell — a velvet Elvis is not about the crisp lines a stencil makes. A velvet Elvis is, rather, about mood.

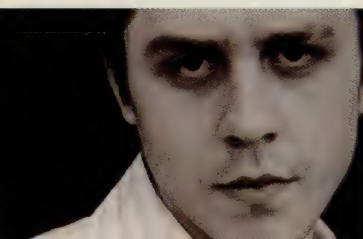
Smoke and mirrors

While there's no way we can condone smoking, we can report on the collecting trend that has sprung from it. Hot items range from vintage cigarette holders and dispensers to modern cigarette advertising. Hobbyists are wasting no time getting their fix of nicotine collectibles. Prices for ashtrays can run from \$5 for plain unsigned pieces to \$130 for souvenir pieces or glass trays on stands. Tabletop lighters have been bid up to \$40 and beyond. Smoking accessories moving into the collectibles arena means one thing — smoking really is a dying art.



"People are afraid of death and in some way, fame has this thing of being able to live forever. And it's a lie."

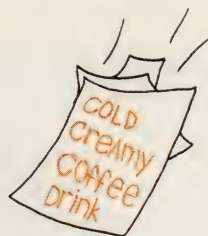
— Giovanni Ribisi, actor in *Saving Private Ryan*, on www.theglobe.com/chat



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- (HEY, IT'S FRIDAY.)

Watch your step in the grocery aisle

At a spry age 82, Dick Wilson is one young Whipple snapper. Coaxed out of retirement after 14 years, Wilson as Whipple can be seen again in those familiar "Please don't squeeze the Charmin" toilet paper commercials. Procter & Gamble's successful campaign — which produced more than 500 commercials in over 20 years — returns to extol the virtues of a new, more "squeezably soft" bath tissue. Values on promotional material will likely rise as Mr. Whipple socks it to a whole new generation carelessly squeezing toilet paper in supermarket aisles. The floor display shown at right, which came straight out of the '60s, got two bids and didn't meet its reserve; not likely to happen again. But what about Whipple himself? Wilson didn't just tout t.p. in his 60-plus-year show-business career. Quick scan your memories — you may recall seeing him in *Planet of the Apes*, Hitchcock's *Dial M for Murder* and a long-forgotten film, *Shakiest Gun in the West* (in which he put the squeeze on a trigger instead of a roll of toilet paper!). On a side note: A 1978 poll named Wilson the third best-known American behind former President Richard Nixon and the Rev. Billy Graham. How's that for fame?



THEN: Wilson touts Charmin.



NOW: Wilson touts a new Charmin.

Photo: That's Entertainment, Inc., Reamstown



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Taking just a few extra clicks, it couldn't be easier to benefit organizations like Rails-to-Trails, Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation, Nature Conservancy or Special Olympics. All you have to do is access your favorite stores like eToys or 1800-Flowers through GreaterGood.com, and five percent of everything you spend goes straight to the non-profit you pick. In addition to all the online juggernauts, GreaterGood also gives you access to more specialized sites like Virtual Vineyards (wine), Digital Chef (cooking equipment), and SmarterKids.com (educational toys

for kids of all ages), as well as businesses that sell specifically socially conscious products like Green Marketplace and WholeFoods.com. And there aren't any hidden tricks — GreaterGood works at no cost to the organizations or to the consumer. How do they do it? By creating an "online shopping village," GreaterGood operates with the affiliate fees that commercial sites usually pay each other for referrals. So when jcrew.com gets a customer through GreaterGood, the clothing company keeps track of the money spent and gives a percentage to the originating site. In turn, GreaterGood uses a portion of these fees to make donations to the non-profit groups their customers choose. Luckily, all you need to do is shop; the people behind the scenes worry about the details. It's safe to say you'd never feel this good about shopping at the mall.

www.greatergood.com



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Sky of blue, sea of green

The Beatles' *Yellow Submarine* is in limited release in nine cities across the country, including Boston, Los Angeles, Denver, San Diego, and Chicago. On September 14th MGM releases the video (suggested retail \$19.98) and DVD (\$29.98).

The new "Songtrack" has been remixed, remastered, and has new art, in addition to featuring all the songs from the movie. Expect an avalanche of merchandising tie-ins appealing to those seeing the movie for the first time as well as those tripping down memory lane.

Here's a list of just a few of the items from the past that are worth big money today: Four hangers featuring cut-outs of each Beatle — failed to make reserve at \$249.50; production cels of the movie — regularly sell for \$400 and up; an original 1968 "Corgi" Yellow Submarine model — \$300 or more depending on condition; the movie poster — has sold for over \$400. Groovy gear this time around includes everything from blow up chairs to keychains, but we can't wait to get our hands on the McFarlane figures pictured here, especially the Blue Meanie.



All the cool computers will want one

With the exclamation "Eye tension? Try another dimension!" Marvin and Michelle Shafer have designed an accessory for any person holding a significant relationship with their monitor — the Monitor Mobile. Even easier to install than AOL, these little wonders hang from a bracket on the side of your monitor and balance serenely over your workspace. Made of anodized aluminum and hand dyed, the mobiles are "uniquely designed for accenting your life as only art can." Prices range from \$25 for the "micro" to \$35 for the "mini." A range of full size mobiles is also available via their catalog. A Web site is in the works. In the meantime contact Q3 Art Inc. at their Chicago studio, (773) 525-3729, or e-mail q3artinc@hotmail.com

"My major was 'undecided' — which is also my life's motto."

— Topher Grace from *That 70's Show* on www.eonline.com/chat

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*Shown is a sample of the products you might find, with savings based on manufacturers' suggested retails.



WWW.ANDYSGARAGE.COM/BARGAINS



In the swing of it

Interest in Frank, Dean, Sammy, Peter, and Joey and the swinging lives they led continues to grow. Written by film critic Lawrence J. Quirk, *The Rat Pack: Neon Nights with the Kings of Cool* (\$13.50) is a look at how these men helped shape Hollywood. Get more slick info at www.spikebooks.com.



Photo: Stock Index Imagery

Easy on the eyes

American Photography: A Century of Images, airs on PBS Wednesday, Oct. 13, at 8:00 p.m. ET (check local listings). The show examines how photography from art to news reporting has impacted American culture. Tune in for a glimpse at the pros whose work shaped the way we see the world. www.pbs.org

It's funny till somebody loses a flaming eyeball

Think the old family sedan could use a little spice? What about a flaming eye antenna ball? (\$4.95) You'll find your hot rod accessories at www.mooneyes.com. Mooneyes is a major licensee and distributor of Ed Roth's Rat Fink and Mooneyes accessories online. For the uninitiated, Ed "Big Daddy" Roth is a custom culture car designer, artist, hot rodder extraordinaire who helped make American pop culture what it is — flames, drooling monsters and all. The hottest items for sale — t-shirts for your bod (\$15), decals for your car (\$5), and Hawaiian Hula Girls (\$25) for every flat surface will transform your car into a custom culture machine in no time. You'll also find "eight ball" gearshift knobs, tiki memorabilia, and other novelties. Mooneyes provides a wide range of the fabled lowbrow culture, with art, merchandise, and links to take you through the depths.



Comic stylings: Kevin Pope - Renard Represents

It wasn't until twenty-two hours later that Bob realized he should've probably read the online auction rules on how to bid.

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Female Premiums

Age	10 YEAR	15 YEAR	20 YEAR	25 YEAR	30 YEAR
35	\$ 103	\$ 125	\$ 145	\$ 183	\$ 205
40	\$ 123	\$ 158	\$ 185	\$ 238	\$ 260
45	\$ 190	\$ 215	\$ 253	\$ 330	\$ 385
50	\$ 253	\$ 290	\$ 363	\$ 490	\$ 495
55	\$ 365	\$ 413	\$ 550	\$ 835	\$ 1,015
60	\$ 503	\$ 615	\$ 845	\$ 2,135	\$ 2,400
65	\$ 775	\$ 975	\$1,593	\$ 3,900	\$ 3,900
70	\$1,338	\$ 1,600	\$2,970	\$ 7,220	\$ 7,220
75	\$2,275	\$ 4,870	\$5,820	\$10,370	\$12,420

Male Premiums

Age	10 YEAR	15 YEAR	20 YEAR	25 YEAR	30 YEAR
35	\$ 123	\$ 138	\$ 165	\$ 223	\$ 253
40	\$ 148	\$ 183	\$ 225	\$ 288	\$ 335
45	\$ 225	\$ 300	\$ 360	\$ 450	\$ 513
50	\$ 338	\$ 455	\$ 525	\$ 743	\$ 828
55	\$ 500	\$ 670	\$ 768	\$ 1,640	\$ 2,330
60	\$ 783	\$ 990	\$1,335	\$ 3,630	\$ 3,630
65	\$1,330	\$ 1,650	\$2,693	\$ 5,250	\$ 5,250
70	\$2,473	\$ 3,175	\$4,860	\$ 8,790	\$ 8,790
75	\$4,400	\$ 7,443	\$9,600	\$13,260	\$15,030

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"Quotesmith.com provides rock-bottom quotes." - *Forbes*

"Quotesmith keeps a database of about 350 insurance companies." - *Good Housekeeping*

"Quotesmith offers particularly thorough searches." - *Los Angeles Times*

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The next Cindy Crawford?

Meet Webbie Tookay, the world's first Virtual Top Model for the millennium. Created by Swedish artist Steven Stahlberg and backed in part by Elite Models (who brought you Cindy, Linda, Kate, and Naomi, among others), Webbie will host a variety of Internet-based entertainment Web sites. Look for her on Webbie News, Webbie Fun, Webbie Cine News, Webbie TV News, WWW – What We Wear and Mens@gem Premiada. Webbie has the look, but was she programmed with talent?



Austin Powers' love machine: \$121,000



Jessica Priest's outfit from *Spawn*

The real thing

New Line Cinema is offering bidders the opportunity to own a piece of movie history — theirs. Check [//auction.newline.com](http://auction.newline.com) for props, promos, autographed gear, and the odd movie poster. All the recent New Line favorites are here, from *Wag the Dog* to *Austin Powers*. Bids can get pretty interesting — take the 1965 Corvette Stingray Mr. Powers drove in *The Spy Who Shagged Me*, which sold for \$121,000. Or the Army jumpsuit and vest from *Spawn* that sold for \$402. Make no mistake, these are the actual props — not repros. When you buy Felicity

Shagwell's boots, you can be sure they've covered Heather Grahams' tootsies as well as shod a disgruntled costume designer or two. Items from older New Line Cinema features may make an appearance, so fans of *Nightmare on Elm Street* or *Island of Dr. Moreau* may want to take heed. However, don't expect a flood of movie props of the past anytime soon. "When we were making movies 10 or 20 years ago we didn't save everything," Jim Rosenthal at New Line says. "Most of the stuff employees or friends of the company have, which we have to try to get back." Auction profits are earmarked for two charities, the Legal Aid Society of New York and New York City's Citymeals-on-Wheels. "We may actually auction off the 'Austin' billboard from Sunset Blvd. in L.A.," Rosenthal offers up. The availability of one-of-a-kind merchandise makes this one irresistible.



Roller Girl's rollerskates



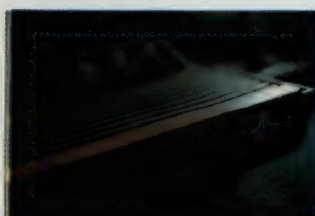
Photo: ©1999 PRN

"Wearing purple socks!!!!"

— Donny Osmond, keeping his image squeaky clean while discussing his "biggest regret" on www.bigstar.com/chat

She's got a way

It's been a busy year for Sarah McLachlan. Just in case you haven't been able to keep up: There's the cookbook *Plenty: A Collection of Sarah McLachlan's Favourite Recipes*. There's the last year of the ultra successful Lilith Fair tour. There's the Amazon.com auctions earlier this year featuring lithographs of her original artwork to benefit LIFEbeat. Amazon also sneak-peeked two tracks from *Mirrorball* before it was released. *Mirrorball* buyers also had the opportunity to create their own custom Sarah CD with choice of artwork at selected music sites. This summer Woodstock.com webcast Sarah's "Surfacing Live" concert that was also shown on pay-per-view. On top of all that, the excellent site bearing her name (www.sarahmclachlan.com) is up-to-date, visually interesting, and fun to use. Are we seeing the multimedia future of pop stardom? Is there anything this woman can't do?



Just try comparing "Frogger" to "Quake II"

Alexander Bilstein, who runs the Atari 2600 Nexus Web site, says nostalgic gamers are fueling the current craze for the Atari 2600. "People have a kind of devotion to Atari." Complete systems with working

joysticks sell for up to \$40. Of the more than 500 games available for the Atari 2600, titles like "Combat" and "Warlords" can be bought for a dollar or less. Harder-to-find titles like "Chase the Chuckwagon" and "Glib" can fetch hundreds of dollars for a well-worn cartridge. The main reason for such a price difference is that the best games sold thousands of copies and can now be found in flea markets and thrifts. Games with premium price tags today were either terrible games nobody bought, or they came out at the end of Atari's lifespan, in the early '80s. Many games have gained availability as the market has opened up with Internet auctions. "It used to all be done through Usenet, and it was really just the hardcore collectors," Bilstein says. "But since eBay has come around, it's brought more people in. Who knows if these are going to be worth anything in the future. Retrogaming is kind of trendy now, so there are probably a lot of people into it that may drop out in a few years."

[//2600nexus.atari.org](http://2600nexus.atari.org)

Contributing: Donovan Finn, Amy Wan, Andrew Grypa

what?? Tech terms 101

Auction stuff, computer stuff, netiquette. Maybe you know what it is, you just don't remember what it stands for. Maybe you never knew. We're here for you.

SMTP: Simple Mail Transfer Protocol, or how e-mail gets from Point A to Point B.

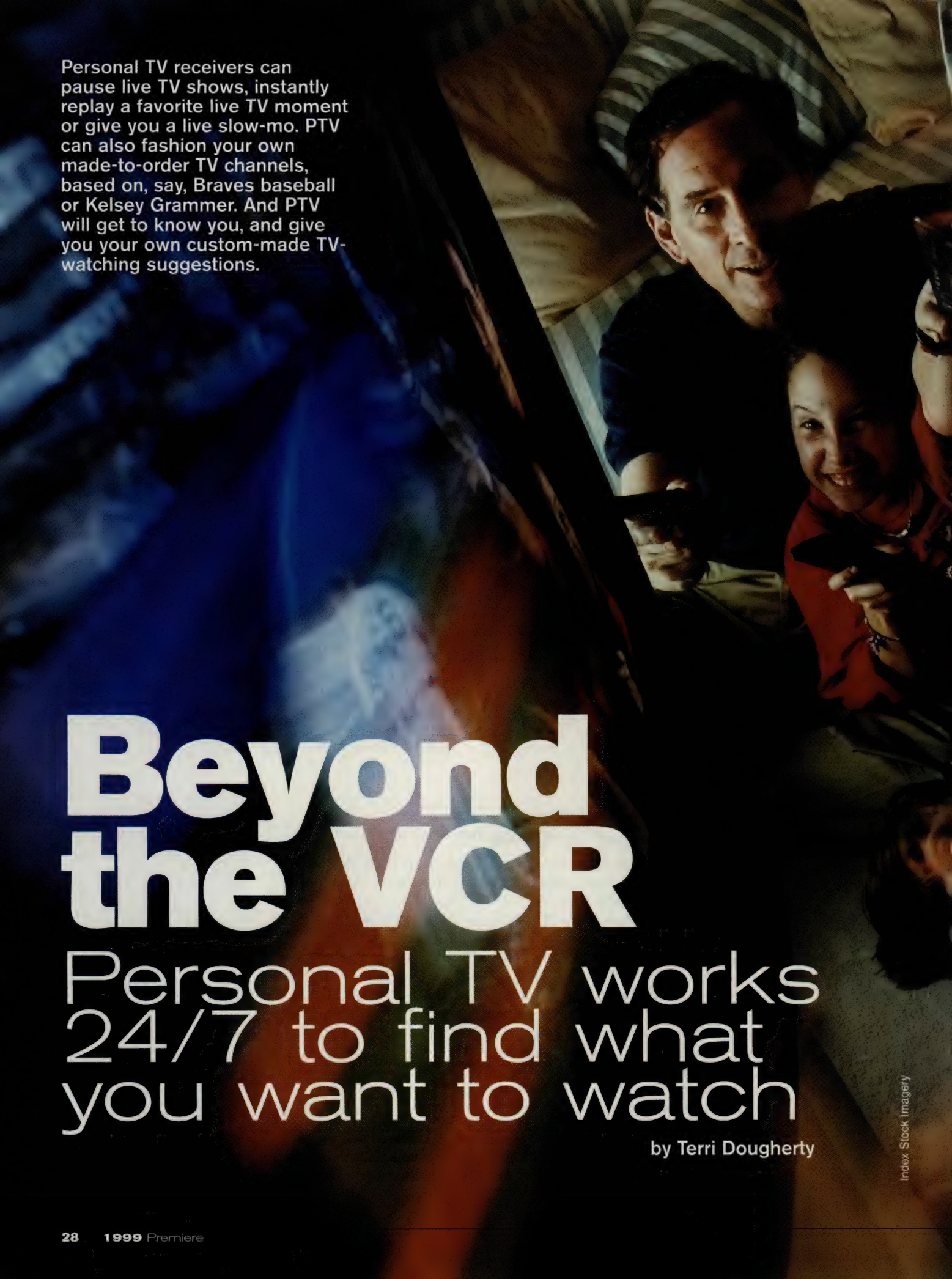
MIB: Mint in box. A collecting term that means an item is just like new and in original packaging. MIB items command higher prices.

DVD: Digital Video Disc. Stores up to 20 times more audio, video, or data than a Compact Disc. Players plug into your TV to bring you movies and music, a DVD drive plugs into your computer to run software, movies, or music.

ISP: Internet Service Provider. Can be local or national, inexpensive to relatively expensive. Check with several ISPs before you decide where to hook up.

Web portal: A souped up search engine. Offers everything from free e-mail to shopping and online auctions. Many former search engines are now portals.

Got a word you can define for others in 25 words or less? Stuck on a word you thought you knew? E-mail ebaybuzz@krause.com



Personal TV receivers can pause live TV shows, instantly replay a favorite live TV moment or give you a live slow-mo. PTV can also fashion your own made-to-order TV channels, based on, say, Braves baseball or Kelsey Grammer. And PTV will get to know you, and give you your own custom-made TV-watching suggestions.

Beyond the VCR

Personal TV works 24/7 to find what you want to watch

by Terri Dougherty

Index Stock Imagery

Don Meyer doesn't flinch if the pizza man comes to the door while he's engrossed in a hockey game. He simply hits the pause button on his personal TV receiver and answers the door. Then he picks up the live game where he left off, zipping through commercials with a fast-forward button and savoring his favorite plays again in slow motion.

Meyer, who lives in suburban St. Louis, has two personal television receivers that let him manipulate live TV shows and record programs without using a VCR.

"It really makes life easier," said Meyer, the father of three boys, ages 15, 14 and 11. "I probably wouldn't need it if I watched more television, but my schedule is totally chaotic."

Personal TV systems use a hard drive to record up to 30 hours of programming. Whenever the TV is on, the system is recording. That's why it's possible to pause a live show — the show is being saved to the hard drive while the viewer has the system on pause.

When the viewer is ready to watch a few minutes later, the system shows the program from the point where it was paused. To catch up to the program being shown in real time, the viewer simply fast-forwards through the commercials. With a conventional VCR, the entire program must be recorded before rewinding to start viewing, in order to avoid missing parts of the show. But PTV lets viewers start watching at any point, because it can continue recording the end of a show while viewers watch the beginning.

The next thing

The growth of personal video receivers could be phenomenal. NBC, the largest television net-

work, believes in the technology so much that it announced in June it is entering into a strategic partnership with TiVo Inc., one of two producers of personal television. The network is making an equity investment in the company as well.

Replay Networks Inc., the other producer of personal TV, announced in late July it has assembled a \$65 million investment syndicate that includes some of the largest media companies in the world, which "represents a major validation of the burgeoning personal television market..."

Josh Bernoff of Forrester Research, a technology and research analysis company in Cambridge, Mass., projects a million personal television units will be sold in the next two years, and in five years 14 million will have been sold.

"If you look historically at TV equipment, the two things that have been highly successful are choice and convenience," Bernoff said. "What you've got now is a device that takes you to the ultimate in choice and convenience." Personal video receivers, along with DVD players, will replace VCRs in 10 years, he predicts.

"In the short-term, [VCRs] will stick around because these devices are too expensive to replace them," Bernhoff said. "But when VCRs stop functioning, people will say, 'Should we buy these other things?'"

A TiVo official agrees that while the personal TV devices will take

away much of the VCR's luster, they won't make it obsolete quite yet. If you want to save a show forever, it's best to save it to a VCR tape to avoid running out of hard drive space, according to James Barton, chief technical officer and vice president of research and development for TiVo.

"A VCR becomes a video printer for TiVo," Barton said.

The set-top boxes are produced by TiVo and ReplayTV, both California-based companies. Their devices have been available through the Internet since spring and will be available in retail stores this fall.

Prices start at \$699 for RePlay TV, which does not charge for programming services, or \$499 for TiVo, which requires a \$10 monthly or \$199 lifetime fee for service.

My own TV channel

While pausing live TV is the feature that attracts many viewers to the new technology, owners say they rarely watch live shows because all their favorites have been recorded.

"I like it for its scheduling ability, the ability to easily just grab every single showing of a particular show that I want," said Eric Lund, a web programmer from Stamford, Conn., who has owned TiVo since early June. "For years I've failed to catch *The Simpsons*, and now I get more *Simpsons* than I could possibly consume in a day."

Aaron Schildkraut, who ordered ReplayTV in November and was "salivating" until it arrived in April, said, "My schedule is not dictated by the network's schedule."

He appreciates the way the system sorts through all the channels fed into it from satellite and cable. The systems dial out automatically early in the morning to update on-screen program guides. Software updates are also sent over telephone lines.

ReplayTV and TiVo both feature the ability to pause live television and easily record programs, but



"I'm in a speed viewing course, catching up on all the programming I've wanted to watch for years."

— Eric Lund of Stamford, Conn., who has owned a TiVo set since June

each also has some unique features.

ReplayTV offers a commercial skipping button and lets users set up show-based channels.

"If you love the *X Files*, you can set up an *X Files* channel and always have *X Files* to watch on demand," said Steve Shannon, vice president of marketing for Replay Networks. "Or if you love Harrison Ford, it will grab any movie with Harrison Ford in it."

TiVo learns its viewers' preferences as they rate shows through thumbs up and thumbs down keys on the remote. The system then tapes shows with similar features.

The result is that there's always something you want to watch on your TV, Barton said.

TiVo also has the ability to target advertising based on viewer preference. The ads are downloaded into the TiVo box, and it sorts through them and selects the ones most likely to interest the viewer.

Theoretically, the viewer preference

information could also be uploaded to TiVo and sold to other marketing firms, but the company promises not to do that in its privacy statement. Viewers also have the option to opt out of the profiling.

"We know we have access to the data, you know we have access to the data, but we're not going to sell your name or data to other people," Barton said.

Commercials and programs you want

Shannon said the units could change the way advertisers use television.

"You would think because of the commercial skipping they'd be pushing it to the background, but it's been practically embraced by the TV and advertising industry because of all the ways it can improve the way advertising works," Shannon said. "It gets to the e-commerce thing, where you could buy a product you're seeing."

"It sounds very much like a nonessential luxury, and it is, in the same way that television is."

—Don Meyer of O'Fallon, Missouri, who owns both a ReplayTV set and TiVo set.

It's better than having commercials slammed in your face."

Barton predicts the systems also will revolutionize the way networks offer programs. The core idea of the technology is having a video server dedicated to you and containing what you want to watch when you want to watch it, he said.

"Radical, radical changes will happen in the TV industry because of this device," Barton said. "That's why NBC invested in the company, knowing this will happen."

The network wanted to learn about the technology, he explained.

"Instead of linear programming, and lining things up, you think of a shelf in the supermarket with NBC wares," Barton said. "How will they promote those things for people to select?"

Shannon expects all TV programs will be watched from a hard drive in five years.

"It's really a broad, wide-open kind

of market," Shannon said. "Watching TV on demand is just nice. The bottom line is that it's useful."

Both companies began by selling units on the Internet and have struck deals with large electronics firms for retailing. ReplayTV is marketed by Panasonic, and TiVo receivers are retailed under the Philips brand name.

The companies that program the personal television receivers must endure in order to assure the products' continued usefulness. If the sets cannot receive updated schedule information when they dial out, the units become very expensive VCRs at best, or paperweights at worst.

Personal television will have staying power, Barton predicted, because it's easy to convince people it's something they want.

"Now my TiVo is fat and happy and knows exactly what I want to watch," he said.

Meyer is confident the companies and the product will last.

"I definitely think this is going to be one of those things that down the road your kids or grandkids will look at you and say, 'What do you mean, you couldn't pause TV?'"

Is Big Brother inside your TV?



Personal TV will fail, because people don't want others invading their privacy and keeping track of their viewing habits, predicts John Dvorak, a columnist for *eBay* and *PC Magazine*.

What is best about personal TV — pausing, fast-forwarding and replaying live television — will eventually become a part of all television sets, he said. But the other aspect of PTV — tracking personal viewing habits in order to customize television viewing schedules and ads — will not catch on, Dvorak said.

With "four or five clicks (of the remote) over an hour or two," information about a viewer's preferences is sent to the PTV hard drive—and to the PTV parent company — so that advertising can be custom-tailored to the viewer's interests, he said. The concept is similar for a visitor to Amazon.com, where banner ads are switched depending on the books ordered by Web site visitors.

"I find custom ads annoying," Dvorak said. "Something about it is creepy. You do have the feeling of being watched."

He believes that feeling of Big Brother watching the set over your shoulder is what will eventually do in the PTV. "I think there will be a moment where it will look like it's going to catch on, and then it won't."

Eventually, all televisions will contain hard drives to allow viewers to manipulate live television shows, because hard drives are becoming so inexpensive, Dvorak said.

PTV is "supposedly easier" to program than VCRs, but "I've looked at these set-top boxes, and they've got a million buttons," Dvorak said, adding that PTV distributors' promises to keep viewer preferences private could fall by the wayside if more distributors enter the field.



TiVo

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www.tivo.com

TiVo: \$499 for the 14-hour model, or \$999 for the 30-hour model.

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ReplayTV

Call 1-800-266-1301

www.replaytv.com

ReplayTV: \$699 for the 10-hour model, \$899 for the 14-hour model or \$1,499 for the 28-hour model. There is no fee for service.



Virtual voyager visits real world

by Reva Basch

I love nothing more than traveling around the Internet, exploring its exotic sights and sounds, investigating its strange cultures, observing — and sometimes participating in — its colorful native rituals. Whoever said “travel is broadening” could have been referring to this virtual voyager’s ever-expanding rump.

The Net is a world-class destination, all right, but even I can’t claim that navigating its twisty little pathways is equivalent to exploring Paris’ quaint cobblestoned streets. Point-and-click isn’t exactly an aerobic exercise, nor does the online realm offer wide-spectrum experiences equivalent to the sights, sounds, smells and tastes of a new city or exotic tropical island. Every now and then you’ve got to log off, power down, and heed the call of the real.

But before you pack, remember — they don’t call it World Wide Web for nothing. The Internet’s international reach puts you in direct and instant touch with destinations on the other side of the globe. A good travel agent is priceless, but you can gather enough information to make critical decisions — when to go, where to stay, what to pack, what to expect — months before you lay your credit card on the line.

From the Net to the bush

My friends Rita and David just returned, aglow, from Down Under. The ostensible purpose of their trip: a friend’s wedding in Brisbane. But their real focus was on getting off the beaten track, into

what the Aussies call the “bush” or, in extreme cases, the “back o’ beyond.” They succeeded, spectacularly, thanks to the Net.

I get my best travel tips from friends who’ve Been There. My pals were ahead of the game, too; they’d gathered a handful of recommended bush resorts and regions with wonderfully evocative names — Echoes at Katoomba, Binna Burra Lodge in Lamington State Park and the much-anticipated Heron Island on the Great Barrier Reef.

Rita, the alpha travel planner, began by plugging names and places into Web search engines. She came up with dozens of pages about each area — ample inspiration for day trips and sights to see en route — as well as sites containing detailed descriptions and contact information for the resorts themselves. (That’s another Net plus: E-mail-enabled hostleries spare you not only fax and international call expenses, but, especially when your destination is half a world away, the aggravation of figuring out if 9 a.m. here is the middle of the bloomin’ night there.)

Online guides to real-world travel

If your friends are stay-at-home types, you can still get firsthand travel reports from online discussion forums, especially the vast collection of cyber-schmooze-fests known as newsgroups: Point your browser to www.deja.com; click on Travel and then on a geographic region. You can search by keyword for specific destinations, or let the descriptions of other people’s expe-

riences — unsolicited, unedited, and always amazingly candid — inspire your own itinerary.

National and regional tourism sites are excellent points of departure. Many include copious links to commercial tour operators, reservation services, and individual hotels and resorts. To follow in my friends’ footsteps, try the Australian Travel Channel (www.au-travel.com.au/) or Travel Australia on the Internet (www.travelaus.com.au/), for starters. Or hone in on your own dream destination using a major travel channel like Yahoo!

(<http://travel.yahoo.com/>) or Excite (www.excite.com/travel/), drilling down by continent, country and region to reach targeted tourism resources all over the Web — and the world. Just remember those beguiling words and images are designed to lure you, just like travel brochures or glossy magazine ads. Once you find a resort that appeals, run it through a search engine and see what others say. Even more important, contact the place directly; the way they respond to your questions will tell you a lot about how they treat their guests.

Before they left for Oz, as the locals call it, Rita pointed me to www.heronisland.com. That beach! That reef! That “Contact Us” link! My mouse-finger is itchin’ to click on that one right now. For my friends, Heron Island proved to be everything its Web presence promised, and more. David captured the experience, vividly, in his Web site travel journal (www.trufun.com/oz) — one more resource for virtual voyagers in search of some real-world R&R.

Reva Basch of northern California is the author of *Researching Online for Dummies and Secrets of the Super Net Searchers*.

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Living the impossible dream

by Selena Maranjian

"Dreams come true; without that possibility, nature would not incite us to have them."

—John Updike

How many times have you been to a wedding and seen single women scrambling to catch the bridal bouquet? Do they really believe if they grab it, they'll get married?

In Las Vegas, you can see more evidence of belief in the unlikely. Think about the \$1.5 billion "Venetian" casino, complete with 3,000 rooms, a Grand Canal, and gondolas. Ponder the fact that at night the town is lit by a billion light bulbs (what an electric bill!). And now ask yourself, "Who's paying for all this?"

The answer, of course, is that the gamblers are. They're losing enough money to light up the night sky. Yet they still pin their hopes on one-armed bandits. (Note the name: "bandits"!)

You know what, though? Sometimes the unlikely does happen. A former professional wrestler was elected governor of Minnesota. People walked on the moon. The Berlin Wall came tumbling down — in our lifetime. Dan Aykroyd was nominated for an Oscar. Who would have guessed?

From \$20,000 to \$270,000

The unlikely is happening in the investing world, too. Think about the thousands of mutual funds out there, managed by well-paid MBAs in suspender and wingtips. With all their schooling and smarts, you'd think their funds would outperform the market average, wouldn't you? Well, that's not the case. According

to Lipper Analytical Services, in the last five years only 102 of the 2,372 open-ended equity funds beat the S&P 500 — that's a mere 4.3 percent. In the past 15 years, only 6.8 percent have topped it.

If you have your heart set on buying mutual funds, consider an S&P 500 index fund. After all, if you can't beat the market, why not aim to match it? Twenty thousand dollars plunked into an S&P 500 index fund that returns the market's historical average of about 11 percent per year will grow to more than \$270,000 in 25 years. All that from one simple deposit.

It may seem unlikely that you — whether you're an elementary school teacher, a factory worker, or a marketing executive — could beat Wall Street at its own game, but you probably can. Not long ago, only the privileged or Wall Streeters could access a wealth of information on companies in a timely fashion. Now anyone with online access can do so — and it's free.

Web path to wealth

Think of some companies that interest you. Click over to www.bigcharts.com and review graphs of how they've performed over long periods of time. Visit www.freeEdgar.com and you can view all the financial statements they've filed with the SEC. At finance.yahoo.com, check the latest news on them and read their message boards. Motley Fool online (www.fool.com) offers daily news reports, as well as portfolio tracking and message boards for many companies and investing topics.

The individual investor's world has changed — for the better. Day or night, thousands of people from all walks of life are sharing information online, asking and answering questions, learning to take control of their own financial futures. This isn't just a fact — it's an opportunity. If you're thinking of investing in Wal-Mart because of its international expansion, spend time in message boards. You might learn from fellow investors in China, Germany or Brazil how Wal-Mart stores are being received there. If you're interested in Starbucks, read what fellow investors think about its new ice cream, Internet and magazine initiatives. Having trouble understanding Microsoft's annual report? Just ask — you'll be surprised by the kindness of strangers.

Design your own dream

For many people, retiring early or putting their children through choice colleges used to be a pipe dream. That's no longer the case. Those once-unlikely outcomes now seem much more likely. New dreams have entered the picture: luxurious retirement, a yearlong trip around the world, starting a business.

I don't believe in getting rich quick. But I do think you can get rich — reliably and slowly. It just takes determination to learn, to make the unlikely happen, to make dreams come true.



Selena Maranjian is a senior writer with The Motley Fool. She is the author of

Investment Clubs: How to Start and Run One the Motley Fool Way and co-author of The Motley Fool Investment Tax Guide.

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Money on the Net and beyond

by Ric Edelman

Some Internet companies have given investors handsome returns. I'm new to investing and have thought a lot about buying Internet companies. How do you think I should view these investments?

It should be obvious from recent events that investing in Internet stocks is extremely speculative. You need to treat them like a gambling trip to Atlantic City or Las Vegas; plan to lose whatever you invest. The likelihood of achieving huge riches is unlikely — largely because you probably won't buy and sell at the right times.

For example, back in July 1996, AOL was trading just below \$4 a share (split adjusted). But would you have bought back then? The company was being sued. The SEC came down hard on it for "questionable" accounting practices. And customers were canceling because they couldn't log on. Nobody wanted this stock. In fact, Fidelity dumped half its shares back then.

Of course since then, the stock grew 271 percent in 1997 and another 715 percent in 1998, for a total two-year gain of 1,939 percent. That's when people really started talking about how hot Internet stocks were. Even if you bought Amazon.com or Yahoo! back then, you'd have to stomach some serious volatility throughout the entire ride. Most investors can't endure it.

When these companies make front-page headlines, it's pretty much too late, yet that's when the general public begins to buy. Even though AOL increased another 219 percent the first 3 1/2 months of 1999, it dropped 49 percent just two months later, erasing almost all of its gains. Sure, it has gone up some since. But investing in the

stock in hopes of enjoying another 1,939 percent increase is foolish.

If you're new to investing, I'd suggest you look at well-diversified mutual funds. It might not be as exciting, but your money will be safer, and in the long run you'll likely be happier with this alternative route to growing your money.

We live in a new world with technology. I hear people say Internet stocks should be looked upon differently than the rest of the pack. Do you agree?

No. A look back in time reveals that investment frenzies, which is what's happening with Internet stocks, are not new. In the 1920s it happened with great companies like AT&T, General Electric and RCA. But during the Crash of '29, these companies lost 35 to 72 percent of their value in weeks.

History repeated itself in the 1960s when space travel, transistors, optical scanners and other new technologies were the rage. The start-up companies in these emerging industries quickly became favorites on Wall Street. But like the Crash of '29, these stocks were doomed.

In the 1970s, it was the Nifty Fifty, a group of companies considered "sure bets" for investors. These stocks, on average, took 10 years to recover from their highs after the bear market of 1973-74. For example, McDonald's went from a high of \$3.76 per share in December 1972 (split adjusted) to \$2.40 in December 1980, a 36 percent loss in eight years. Xerox dropped from \$49.74 a share to \$19.95, a 60 percent loss. And Polaroid fell from \$63 a share to \$12.50, an 80 percent loss.

The early 1980s brought another wave of "ground floor" opportunities. They were called limited partnerships, and as many people today know all too well, they created some of the biggest losses ever suffered by the investing public.

Each time it was different and each time the investing public lost its money. I don't think it's prudent to ignore history — or established securities analysis techniques.

Could you please tell me the difference between a stock broker and an online broker?

Advice and price. At full service brokerage firms like Merrill Lynch, you work with a single stockbroker who provides investment advice and services your account. You'll also pay maximum commissions (usually in the \$100 price range, depending on stock price and your account trading activity), because that's how the broker gets paid.

Online firms, on the other hand, follow your instructions — typically to execute trades. They offer no advice, and you usually never deal with a live person. This means you have no specific contact person to work with, no professional to bounce ideas off of, and no one to help you make important investment decisions. The good news: commissions are cheaper than those you pay at full service firms. For e*trade it's just \$14.95.

Which is best for you? If you need advice, hire a full service firm. If you know what you're doing and have the time (and the desire) to track investments yourself, use an online broker.

Ric Edelman, founder and chairman of the financial planning firm Edelman Financial Services Inc. of Fairfax, Va., is the official financial planner for America Online. He is the author of two bestselling books, *The Truth About Money* and *The New Rules of Money*.



Online auctions: bigger is better

by John C. Dvorak

The concept of critical mass is well-known to marketers. The term stems from the days of nuclear research when a critical mass of fissionable material was needed to create a chain reaction. Any less and nothing happens.

This concept probably applies more to this burgeoning on-line/Internet auction scene than anything else we're witnessing on the Internet. Unfortunately, it isn't fully realized by the eBay auction competitors, resulting in a lot of confusion among end-users. I do not believe that the auction scene as it exists today will last much longer.

What will disappear are the ancillary auction sites that only exist because they *can* exist. Third party software developed to give any portal an instant auction capability is a cute idea and one that apparently appeals to operations such as Yahoo! and Amazon, among others.

What will be eventually understood is that the critical mass at eBay for general purpose auctions has already been realized, and nobody who thinks clearly would go elsewhere to sell their wares — for the simple reason that nobody goes elsewhere.

The best that can be achieved by newcomers to the auction scene is a short-term buyers market. If nobody is going there the likelihood of finding some obscure deal that nobody is bidding on increases. But it doesn't take long for sellers to

spot this problem and stay away, resulting in a downward spiral in interest. Eventually the auction section becomes laughable and ridiculed (ridiculed far beyond what I'm doing here). "How many users does it take to make an auction on Amazon?" "None, apparently!"

Focus wins business

Most of the problem stems from an inability for many sites to focus on what they do best. Making things worse is the fact that these companies can't quite figure out who the leader is so they copy each other needlessly. Excite becomes an online magazine, so Yahoo! does the same. Amazon adds an auction site and then so does everyone else. This lack of focus on core competency — an apt buzz term used by the financiers — is astonishing.

To the detriment of my argument, this column is running in a magazine focusing on eBay and my sincerity can be thus doubted. "They paid him to write that!" "Pay no attention to the columnist promoting eBay!"

In fact the only reason I took on this column was because I do feel strongly about the direction of the auction business, and eBay is the clear front-runner. And the key to it remaining in front is the fact that it hasn't decided to become a Web site reviewer or a medical information portal or anything else not related to auctions. AND, most importantly, it has achieved critical mass.

Wine, cars and butlers

The long-term threat to eBay, according to almost all of the pundits, will not be the do-all portals, but vertical sites specializing in one kind of item, such as cameras or wines or automobiles.

There is also the possibility of a Christie's or Sotheby's figuring out the scene and making inroads. More likely is that those houses will continue to do what they do best: selling high-end art and antiques to the extremely well-heeled, who will fly to London (or send the butler) to bid on an item. eBay has some of that market covered with its relationship to Butterfield & Butterfield; if that corner of the market goes more toward online buying and selling, then it's in a good position to capitalize.

Any trends here will reveal themselves over the next 36 months. In June, Sotheby's joined forces with the Amazon auction folk, and how that actually unfolds is something everyone is watching. Personally, I don't see the high-end of the auction scene going online any time soon except as part of an occasional promotional publicity stunt. Christie's says it will add an online component, but it will run all the objects through its shops. This is the auction version of repurposing. No threat to eBay there.

More likely are intense vertical sites for low- to medium-priced items that can gain critical mass if there is not too much competition too soon. Take wine, for example. I collect old wine and have actually added to the collection, thanks to eBay, and expect to sell some bottles shortly. There are a lot of wines offered on eBay, but there does not seem to be a critical mass of knowledgeable collectors buying and selling.

There are too many turkeys or trendy over-priced wines and far too many of those crummy bottles with celebrity names emblazoned on the label.

A good vertical wines-only Web site should do well in this space. But what's going to happen?

The future belongs to those who get it

I see the vertical site phenomenon hitting too much at once, resulting in a lot of sites, with none getting critical mass. Here is where a brand name such as Christie's could come along and take over this vertical segment, because this is the traditional auction house for fine wines worldwide; everyone in the busi-

ness knows this fact. Sotheby's as a lesser player in this space could probably take it over if it moved fast enough, with Amazon's help.

I don't see this happening any time soon, though, as these companies cannot possibly have anyone in management who would have a clue how to do this. They don't know where to get the auction software. They don't know what a server is. They know nothing. They'd end up spending too much for too little and looking foolish.

I assume the same argument holds true within each possible vertical market, leaving eBay with even more of the business.

I would be surprised if eBay doesn't pursue the verticals by

spinning off sub-segments of its own site into separate companies called eBay Affiliates or eBay Partners or some such thing. These will be the players in the vertical markets. I can predict this because eBay is focused on its core business. Not a lot of Internet companies even know what their core business is anymore. And older brick-and-mortar companies who could enter this arena still don't get it.

John C. Dvorak is the author of columns in PC Magazine and PC Magazine Online and the host of Silicon Spin on ZDTV. He is the author of several best-selling books, including Dvorak's Guide to PC Telecommunications.



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Pushing the Net speed limit

by Al Gordon

High-speed Internet access is a little bit like the old line that says you can never be too thin or too rich. Faster connections are a plus, whether you are doing e-commerce or simply surfing the Web. But the quest for speed is not as simple as it might seem.

My local cable company liked to advertise its modem service with the slogan: "This is Broadband. This is the way." Not precisely specified was — the way to what?

In the next year or so, most U.S. computer users can expect to be barraged with ads offering faster Internet service. But as with so much computer technology, there's fine print to consider:

- Which service provider should I choose?
- What equipment will I need?
- And the inevitable: if this is so fast, why is this download taking so long?

Making tracks on the Net

Let's consider the last item first, since that's the little wrinkle that broadband companies rarely include in their ads.

When you get a good, high-speed connection, the results can be amazing. For example, with a typical dial-up connection, a good download rate would be something just over 3 KBps. My cable modem has given me downloads in excess of 100 KBps. You can realistically expect to download megabytes of

data in seconds or minutes that would have been a matter of minutes and hours by dial-up.

High-speed Internet access radically changes the way you buy and upgrade software. The upgrading features built into many popular applications these days suddenly become an extraordinarily convenient way to keep your system up-to-date. Not just upgrades, either. Downloading software always has been the key distribution method for "shareware" (products from small developers), but downloading now has gone mainstream.

This is only the tip of the iceberg, however. Financial services profit from high-speed Internet connections. My bank's especially elaborate Web site, which loads at a glacial pace over a phone line, gives some approximation of being convenient over a cable modem. Similarly, broadband gives multimedia new power. Those videos you hesitated to download, because of the time it would take, now are readily available.

My experience is that when high-speed Internet connections are really humming, the Internet is transformed from an entertaining diversion into a medium where serious business can be transacted.

But there's the rub. "When they are humming."

Just as I have been delighted

with high-speed downloads, I also have struggled with download speeds of 2 KBps or less. It turns out that there are a couple dirty little secrets about high-speed Internet access.

1. Your connection may be fast, but that doesn't mean the site you are connecting to is equally as rapid. Many servers were built to accommodate dial-up traffic, and simply lack the capacity to push data out very fast. Moreover, one quickly discovers that popular Web sites, even if they have a lot of bandwidth, still regularly get overwhelmed by heavy traffic.

2. Even if the servers are okay, there's still the problem of Net congestion. The Internet wasn't originally designed to handle the volume of communications common today. The Internet infrastructure has undergone constant re-jiggering, but sometimes it shows its age.

Which provider?

Actually, the answer is easy: from whomever you can.

While every cable and telephone company in the known universe is talking about high-speed Internet access, too often it's still just talk. In the Boston area, where I live, one cable system rolled out its broadband system in Cambridge first, and it got to my town more than a year later. Meanwhile, Boston itself is still without it. The telephone company is talking about high-speed data service, but home users can't get it.

As a result, while I have high-speed Internet access, almost none of the people with whom I communicate regularly can get it. Someday this will seem laughable. For now, though, most con-

sumers' choices are limited. So you pretty much have to take whatever it is you can get.

Eventually, there will be options. And they pretty much come down to this: via cable or via telephone line. Cable systems transmit Internet data across the same lines that feed your TV set, and can deliver transmission speeds up to around 1.5 MBps. The telephone company counter is "Digital Subscriber Line" service (DSL), an advanced way to funnel digital data over telephone lines.

The key considerations here are speed and price. Cable modems share the cable system's bandwidth — in other words, if everyone on your block goes Web surfing on your cable connection, your high-speed connection could become a very slow one. This is nothing to lose a lot of sleep over, though, as cable modem usage will have to be several orders of magnitude higher than it is now before this will become a serious factor.

DSL bandwidth isn't shared, so in that sense it is more consistent. But most telephone company pricing plans leave something to be desired. Cable modem service tends to be in the \$40 per month range; at that price, telephone companies generally are offering a form of DSL that's not as fast, and are pricing DSL with speeds as fast as cable modems closer to \$100 per month.

One reason to root for competition is to see prices come down and technical capabilities go up.

What equipment?

High-speed Internet connections require a different kind of

equipment set up than you might be used to with conventional dial-up modems. The cable or telephone line connects to a special — and expensive — modem. This, in turn, connects to a networking card in your PC. Of this array of equipment, the network card is the only one you need buy. You can purchase the modems or you can lease them from your cable or telephone company. If you did straight cost analysis, the purchase price would pay for itself in two years or so. Of course, you then would own a piece of probably obsolete technology. I personally prefer to rent, and let the cable company worry about the modem's care and feeding.

For all the fits and starts, the number of companies now pursuing the technology means that high-speed Internet access will be coming soon to a telephone or cable line near you. I think it's the greatest thing since sliced bread. But then, I am not entirely sure how exciting sliced bread really is.

Al Gordon is a Boston-based consultant and writer who specializes in personal computing and new media. He is contributing editor for the online newsletter The Naked PC and co-author of the forthcoming Windows 2000 Annoyances series.

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A map for the Web wilderness

by Mike Neumeier

You know, I'm starting to think the World Wide Web is just too big. I remember the days when you could type in www.insertcompany-here.com and you would be transported to the location you wanted. Now, given the billions of URLs, finding anything useful on the Net is, like, you know, work.

That brings me to my first point of contention: portals.

Portals are essentially souped-up Internet search engines, like Yahoo! and Excite. Portals are great and have their place, but not on my browser. The explosion of the Net means that the average surfer is going to have to get a bit more resourceful to find useful information online. My suggestion: get vertical!

Vortals

I'm not talking about an extreme sport, I'm talking about using extremely vertical Web sites. Earlier this year the word "vortal" appeared in Internet publications. This is quite simply a vertical portal (gosh those Internet vocabulary people are clever). Whereas portals like Netscape Netcenter, Yahoo! and Excite have become popular with consumers, vortals are places where members of a focused industry or profession gather on the Net.

For example, you are more likely to find killer accounting information at www.electronicaccountant.com than at www.yahoo.com. And at VerticalNet, www.verticalnet.com, you can find nearly 40

community vortals, from oil and gas to hydrocarbons and solid waste. My advice: search for vertical or industry-wide sites to help you online. Don't be just a Yahoo.

Vengines

My second point of contention: search engines. Recently a study by the NEC Research Institute in Princeton, N.J., found that search engines index only one sixth of the Web. Furthermore, the ability of search engines to catalog the Internet appears to be on the decline. On average it takes six months for the "all powerful" search engines to find a new Web site.

Taking things a step further, I have recently stumbled across vertical search engines (should I call them "vengines"?). That's right, a search engine that ensures that when you are looking for information about a serious subject — say "Viagra" — you don't have to wade through thousands of links to Bob Dole fan clubs.

One example of a vertical search engine is Caredata.com's CiteLine. In 1998, more than 22 million U.S. adults went online to find health care information, one of the Internet's top uses. I can assure you that a large percentage of those 22 million users didn't find much useful health care information when using general consumer search engines.

Truth be told, the CiteLine technology is a business-to-business search tool. The creators, however,

have been kind enough to put a free, no-frills version on the Web. Found at www.caredata.com, CiteLine gives searchers efficient access to relevant health care information, avoiding the clutter and confusion created by the multitude of Web sites. As a result, this is a great vertical search engine that consumers should pound the heck out of; After all, it's on the Web and it's free.

Probing a prospective employer — or investment possibility

My final point of contention: Businesses, especially public companies, cannot hide on the Internet. For the consumer, the small business person or even the Fortune 100 employee, the Internet holds just about every piece of competitive information you could ever want about a friend or foe. The trick, as I have been bemoaning thus far, is finding it. My No. 1 tip when searching for the skinny on a company today is to check out its own Web site. It's amazing how much information companies put online.

Whether preparing for a job interview, scouting for new business or evaluating investment opportunities, an organization's own site is rich with content — if you know where to look. The first place to check out is any online "press room," "media kit" or "media only" section. This immediately gives you access to breaking news, executive bios, facts and figures, e-mail addresses and even phone numbers that are answered by real people — any company sending a reporter to an automated telephone attendant should have its business license revoked.

In addition, "In the News" sections of Web sites are great snoops-

ing areas. Most companies cannot resist linking even lukewarm media coverage to their sites. At face value, media reports are mostly unbiased and the good ones report only the facts, letting you, the reader, draw your own conclusions.

Aside from a company's own site, there are some other Internet properties that should be on your short list when researching an organization. For public companies, I suggest clicking on Company Sleuth at www.companysleuth.com. This free, online business information service harnesses some of the vast information resources on the Web and provides usable results.

The site's goal is simple: uncover

nuggets of information that provide users with clues to unannounced plans. Although information uncovered by Company Sleuth is available to anyone on the Internet, it would not be easily found through a general search engine.

Company Sleuth directs daily company updates to users via e-mail. These include information such as filings for Internet domains, trademarks, patents and new job postings — the type of information that provides important clues to anyone interested in keeping tabs on an organization. However, I find the most exciting action to be in the recaps of daily postings to various Internet message boards. Talk about rumors

and scoop ... this is better copy than a supermarket tabloid.

All in all, search engines are important but should never be seen as the end-all solution for information. Getting as vertical as possible will help you get more out of your time online.

J. Michael Neumeier, Jr., is a Web surfer who also works as the Technology Group Director for Duffey Communications, a media, marketing and message management firm based in Atlanta. He contributes regularly to National Public Radio's Peach State Public Radio Network as a cyber-reporter.

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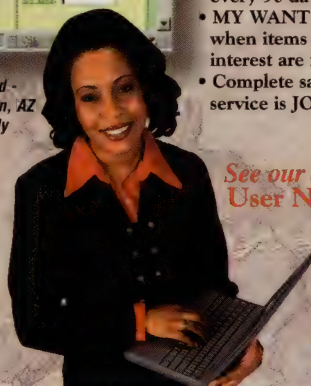
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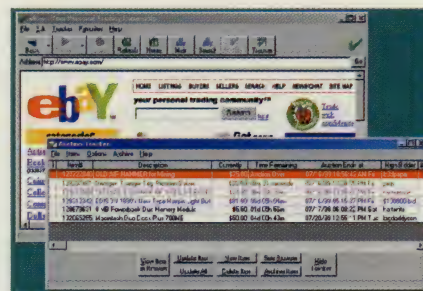
inspect our gadgets

Each month, we'll introduce you to 10 tech toys: the newest, most helpful, or just plain most fun stuff around



Video dreams

Imagine a "blue hedgehog in full 360-degree 3D, blazing across the screen." Now, make him climb, fly, snowboard, and even talk in the race to stop evil Dr. Robotnik. Travel through vast video worlds on the new Sega Dreamcast video system. Sega says the system has the "most sophisticated 3D graphics ever seen on a video game console." A built-in modem allows multi-player online gaming. The system will debut with seven games. SRP: \$199, www.sega.com.



Going, going...

Now you can sit at your computer and keep track of all your eBay auctions at once with Auction Browser. The newly launched PC software lets eBay users automatically update current bid prices and even convert time zone differences. It also includes a database of completed auctions. SRP: \$19.95, trial version, www.auction-browser.com.

Writing in ink – in your computer

The Crosspad XP takes handwritten notes on your PC a step farther. Cross Pen Computing Group brought out the Portable Digital Notepad last year, allowing users to write in ink on a standard pad and upload their handwritten notes to a PC. Now the smaller Crosspad XP makes in-the-field computerized note-taking more portable. Users can also save notes in more formats, and e-mail notes to other Windows users, even if they don't share the software. SRP: \$249, (800) 510-9660, www.cross-pcg.com.



XCam: baby online

Just because you're lost in cyberspace or TV land doesn't mean you can't keep track of your family. The XCam is a super-small, color video camera you can place in a nursery, family room or doorway. Coupled with a sender and receiver, the inconspicuous minicam transmits live video images of children, pets or significant others up to 100 feet without wires, directly to your TV or computer screen. It can also be used to record birthday parties and other events. SRP: \$150, www.x10.com.

A computer link to your wrist

Never forget your anniversary again, with a computer-generated nag right there in your watch. Owners of the Timex Ironman Triathlon watches with data link system can wirelessly download appointments and reminder alarms from their computer into the watch. Timers for soccer, basketball and football also can be downloaded, as well as adjustable chronographs and countdown timers for personal workouts. SRP: \$70. Notebook computer adapter, \$30. (800) 367-8463, www.timex.com.





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"WHAT DO YOU SAY?"

Thanks for your speedy shipment. I am very impressed with your online tracking system and the way my order was handled. Needless to say, the words 'Buy.Com' are no longer in my vocabulary. - JT

It's not easy to find a company that places such a high value on customer satisfaction. Now that I need to buy a new monitor, would you like to take a guess where I will get it? - DF

Thank you very much. I am sure I will be shopping at egghead.com for years to come. - AT

Having been in the customer service industry I can really appreciate someone who takes pride in what they do. - BK

My first Internet purchase was from egghead.com. I was pleased with the quick and easy shopping, and with the quality of the product you sold me. I will be shopping with you again. - AS

I searched several online sites before ordering a computer, and egghead.com had the best prices by far. Thanks for being there for those looking for reasonable computer deals. Keep up the good work. - CJ

I wanted to let you know that your service technician was a great help. She went beyond all to give customer satisfaction. I wanted her to be recognized by her superiors... there are service technicians who do know what the word service means. - MM

Your prompt attention is a definite plus for online shopping. I will definitely spread the word about the prompt service provided by egghead.com. Have a nice day, you definitely made mine a nice one. - JC

egghead.com is certainly a welcome change to see customer oriented support in the web marketplace, as I have been severely burned by web based businesses in the past. - JW

This shopping experience has proved exactly how helpful egghead.com really is. - CV

Once again you have confirmed my opinion that your company is the best on the net. - CP

"Job Well Done!!!" I recently participated in the egghead.com auction. The entire experience has been absolutely first class. From the moment I logged on to your web site until the [delivery] man brought the product to my home. A truly professional job. - LA

I was a first time buyer and extremely pleased with your fast and efficient service. I had my product in only two days. Very impressive. - LB

It was easy to sign up and bid at the auction. Your service was excellent. I was able to track my purchase from day to day. Thank You! Thank You! Thank You! - SH

I hope you realize what my experience at egghead.com does for a customer. Not only am I one who does a lot of business through egghead.com. When someone goes out of their way to make the customer happy and feel as though he is important, and an asset to the company. - AT

You have some of the finest customer service people I have ever had the pleasure of dealing with. You have a great staff, and I do appreciate the effort they have made. - GI

"At it's heart, the Egghead name exudes warmth and security, and reminds customers they're dealing with real people..."
www.marketing.computers.com

I am an investor in egghead.com and would like to compliment you on your low prices, as I have shopped around and compared. - DS

I wanted to commend you for your excellent business practice. It is the exact way business should be done. And I just love receiving your email special offers. No pressure, no hassle, no stupid fine print. - MG

When I purchase merchandise through the Internet, I always have my reservations about the service. Only a few companies stand apart, egghead.com is part of those few. - N

I am so pleased with the service, help, user-friendly site, equipment and delivery. I am recommending egghead.com to everyone that we know. - EB

I just wanted to write and thank you for your extraordinary service. I am a long-time customer and I will continue to be a loyal Egghead. - JY

This is my first time bidding at the auction and I enjoyed it. Look forward to future business with you. - AD

Just want to say that I have tried a couple of other Internet sites similar to egghead.com, and they just don't compare. I get the products that I order, usually within a week, while the others either don't come at all or take 6 weeks or better. Thanks for giving such good service. - GB

Thank you for your fast and courteous delivery with no waiting at all. It is a pleasure doing business with you. - JD

I will recommend egghead.com to anyone who asks as the best Internet computer site. - KR

Techies need not apply

Wouldn't it be nice to get e-mail from Mom instead of those long-winded voice-mail messages? What's that, Mom's afraid of the Internet? Ease her into the millennium with the iPhone 2000 series.

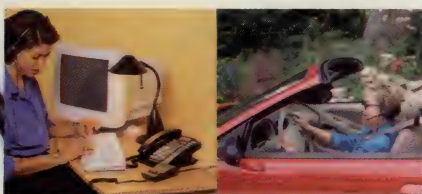
The iPhone is a web browser, e-mailer, phone and answering machine in one. Touch screen menus are designed for newbies. It'll leave your voice mailbox free for urgent messages — in case that blond from last week's softball game calls. SRP: \$399, www.infogear.com.



How to juggle driving, coffee and your boss

It's commuter hell: you're driving and drinking hot coffee — then your boss calls on the cell phone. How about taking one of those chores out of your hands?

BellSouth says its hands-free headset for cell and cordless phones has a microphone with "superior clarity." The headset band can be worn behind your ear or over your head, and can be used in the office or in your car. SRP: \$51, www.bellsouth.com.



A phone for the battlefield

The "Rock" mobile phone is so rugged it meets U.S. military MIL810E specs for hazardous environments, according to Ericsson Mobile Phones. But those not heading into a war zone still might appreciate the Rock's water-, shock- and dust-resistant features. The phone's national radio broadcast mode allows up to 96 people to participate in a group call. The Rock (R250d PRO) also offers four hours of talk time, 80 hours of standby time, e-mail and fax support and a rugged attachment clip "for extreme environments." SRP: \$299, (800) 374-2776, www.ericsson.com.



The written word that can be heard

Everyone who ever loved having someone read aloud to them may also love the Quicktionary Reading Pen. As readers pull the battery-powered pen across text, it displays words in large characters and reads aloud either through its speaker or earphones. Readers also can have a word defined for them with the push of a button. SRP: \$299, with discounts available for educators, students and parents of special-needs children, www.readingpen.com, toll-free (877) 344-4040.



Mouse design travels from computer to sander

The palm-hugging design of the computer mouse was the inspiration for a sander from Black&Decker, the Mouse Sander/Polisher. The Mouse features "an ergonomic design" and includes 23 polishing, sanding and scrubbing accessories. SRP: \$60, (800) 544-6986, www.blackanddecker.com.

Out-of-Print Books



FOUND: James Joyce's *Collected Poems*

Anne was searching for a book of poems she had read years earlier. It should have been easy enough; after all, it was James Joyce. But it was out-of-print. Then she logged on to bn.com. *If we don't have your book, nobody does.*

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Is the future electric?

by Ann Schottman Knol

What if your car could slide neatly into a motorcycle parking space, right by the door? What if you never had to buy gasoline? And what if you could travel legally in the carpool lane, even when you were all alone?



For owners of some neighborhood electric cars (NEVs) — intended mainly for short-range commuter travel — these “what ifs” are an everyday reality. These drivers glide silently through their communities in futuristic-looking, battery-powered vehicles, and they plug into the nearest outlets rather than visiting gas stations.

Many cities regulate energy-efficient electric cars the same way they regulate energy-efficient motorcycles, which means owners of the faster NEVs — ones that can keep up with highway traffic — can cruise the carpool lane while riding solo.

Battery-operated NEVs are “one attractive option” as we move away from the “one vehicle fits all” culture in which we have been operating, according to Daniel Sperling, director of the Institute of Transportation

Studies at the University of California, Davis. Electric vehicles are more energy efficient and more reliable than fossil fuel cars, and their motors last longer, Sperling said. Electric cars have “zero or near-zero emissions” and they have a “smooth, powerful” acceleration, with a “better driving feel” because of high torque at low speeds.

But NEVs as they are currently engineered, with lead-acid batteries, work only for short-distance commutes in warm temperatures.



Major car manufacturers are experimenting with fuel cell electric cars or a hybrid of electricity and fossil fuel as replacement power sources for larger vehicles traveling longer distances, Sperling said. NEVs have an important place in short-distance commuting, however, he added.

“It’s a happy-looking little contraption”

Will Skillman, a private investor from Naples, Fla., bought an NEV as a third vehicle about six months ago. He said it “makes a lot of sense for just running around. It doesn’t take any space parking — you can park it virtually anywhere — and it consumes no gas, there are no fumes in the air. I use it all over the neighborhood, to get the paper and coffee in the morning, to go to the local grocery store. It’s very handy.”

The car has required no maintenance beyond plugging it in at home, Skillman said.

Doris Sheehan of Fort Myers, Fla., said an NEV is now her only car. Over a year ago, she sold her Lincoln Town car and now tools around the retirement village where she lives — which covers a 75-acre island — in her electric vehicle.

“I go all around the island, and

the neighborhood across the bridge,” she said. “I use it to go to the bank, the little delicatessen, the beauty shop, those important things. It drives beautifully.” The trunk is “quite commodious,” and will hold several bags of groceries, she said.

Skillman and Sheehan both own Bombardier NVs, an NEV which has been available for about three years, much longer than some other NEVs. Besides the ease of use, they say the reactions they get from passers-by make driving their NEVs a delight.

“I think probably the best part of the whole thing — and it’s been consistent ever since I first started driving it in November — is when people look at it they invariably will smile,” Skillman said. “It makes people happy. It’s a happy-looking little contraption.”

When Sheehan first bought her NEV, a truck that was going by pulled over and the men inside got out to look it over.

“They even got down on the cement and looked under it,” she said. “Everyone still waves when I drive by, and when I park, they still come around and look. It really makes it enjoyable. You can make a lot of friends.”

Golf carts in the fast lane

NEVs were first born as safer, more versatile replacements for the golf carts that have been used for years for local transportation in gated communities such as retirement villages.

"People were using golf carts with no speed capabilities and no safety features," said Mike Clevenger, director of sales and marketing for Global Electric MotorCars of Fargo, N.D. Users wanted a safer vehicle that could better keep up with traffic flow. "In a golf cart you can only go 13 miles an hour, but we're required to go 25 miles an hour. And golf carts don't have lights or seat belts, but we do. They were just saying golf carts weren't adequate."

Most NEVs operate at 25 to 40 mph, and cost approximately \$6,500-\$7,500, but the Sparrow from Corbin-Pacific whizzes along at a top speed of 65 mph and costs almost twice as much — \$12,900.

The newly released Sparrow, with its boost in speed, was intended "primarily as urban transportation," said Tom Corbin of Corbin-Pacific. The Sparrow is fast enough to keep up with traffic in the carpool lane, and because NEVs are

"It doesn't take any space parking ... and it consumes no gas; there are no fumes in the air. It's very handy."

— Will Skillman, owner of a Bombardier

generally classified as motorcycles, that would make the Sparrow carpool-lane legal in many communities, even though there's only room for one in the vehicle. That makes it perfect for most commuters, Corbin said.

"Statistics show that 87 percent of Americans live less than 18 miles — one way — from work, and 93 percent of the time they're alone when they drive to and from work."

However, most NEVs with lower top speeds are legal only on streets where the top posted speed limit is 35 mph.

Skillman and Sheehan both say they never take their NEVs, which have a top speed of 25 mph, out on the highway. Sheehan said her NEV is perfect for the island where she lives, because the top speed is 15 mph, but the fast-moving traffic on the highway would "squash me like a bug."

The lower-speed NEVs are ideal not only for gated communities but also for workers in venues such as large malls, amusement parks and military bases, Clevenger said.

Federal regulations require that 75 percent of federal agencies' regular fleet vehicles use alternate fuel, he said. That ruling has meant a new spate of orders for some NEV manufacturers.

Federal law also grants electric-vehicle buyers a 10 percent federal tax credit, and in Florida the vehicles are exempt from sales tax. Skillman said the Florida sales tax exemption saved him about \$500.

Electric commuting

NEV manufacturers want their vehicles to be used not just in gated communities and large protected work areas, but as second or third cars for travel to and from work and shopping in town. The vehicles have the safety features that their golf cart predecessors lacked, such as lights, turn signals and seat-belts. For hauling loads at work or for shopping, the GEM has utility vehicles with short or long beds, and Carl Watkins, president of Neighborhood Electric, notes that the Gizmo can hold up to six bags of groceries.

The NEVs' small profile means they can park in tight spaces. In fact, Corbin said, the Sparrow is eight feet long but only four feet wide, and it backs up to a parking space, taking just four feet of curb, which means four Sparrows can fit in one normal car parking space.

Most NEVs can plug into normal 110-volt outlets, which means they could be recharging outside an office building while their owners are working. Most buildings do have outside plugs, Watkins asserts, but "people just aren't used to looking for them."

While NEVs don't take gas, they do need replacement batteries. Owners will have to replace batteries about every two years in NEVs that are used daily, and a complete set of lead-acid batteries costs about \$500. The faster Sparrow uses a more advanced set of "deep cycle" lead acid batteries that will have to be replaced every two to five years. At today's prices, replacement would cost about



\$1,500, but manufacturers hope that improvements in battery technology will bring prices down by the time owners first have to replace batteries.

Not tundra vehicles

While the NEVs may work for some commuters, they won't work for everyone. The range of most NEVs is about 25 to 30 miles on a single charge, which makes them an impossible choice for anyone with a long commute.

And the NEVs are not made for the blizzards and frigid conditions of northern winters. "These aren't tundra vehicles by any stretch of the imagination," Clevenger said. The Gizmo, the Bombardier NV and the GEM don't even have heaters, although a model of the GEM coming out in the fall will have a heater. Severe cold can also cut the range an NEV will go on a charge by almost half, unless it is

"I use it to go to the bank, the little delicatessen, the beauty shop, those important things."

— Doris Sheehan, NEV owner

plugged in or protected from the cold, manufacturers say.

The Sparrow does have a heater, and it is so efficient that a dealer trying out a prototype in Maine last winter had to keep turning the heater off, Corbin said. But even the Sparrow is "not designed to go through snow drifts." NEV owners should use alternate transportation in severe cold or on icy, snowy roads, just like motorcycle owners, he added. Joel Prescott, national sales manager for the Bombardier NV, said the NEV's cold-weather limitations mean Bombardier has targeted the Sunbelt, although the

company does have some dealers in colder climes.

Better batteries

Despite current limitations on electric vehicles, in the future "most or perhaps even all" vehicles will be powered by electricity in some form, Sperling predicted. The first generation of new, longer-lasting batteries already has been engineered, and prices of these improved batteries will continue to fall, he also predicted.

Widespread use of electric cars will mean decreased pollution, more dependable cars and a better driving experience, Sperling said. And, he added, having electric power right on board a vehicle will mean drivers can plug in all sorts of auxiliary electric appliances that drain too much power from a fossil fuel-powered car. Just think; some day you'll be able to perk your own coffee on the way to the office. ☐

Get electric



Car: **GEM**

Manufacturer:

Global Electric MotorCars, LLC, Fargo, N.D.
888-871-4367

global@gemcar.com
www.gemcar.com

Models: GEM two-passenger, 48- or 72-volt motor. GEM four-passenger, 72-volt motor.

GEM utility vehicle, two passengers, large or small cargo box, 72-volt motor.

Top speed and range: 23 to 25 mph, 30-mile range

Price: Starts at \$6,495



Car: **Sparrow**

Manufacturer:

Corbin-Pacific Inc., Hollister, Calif.
831-634-1100

chuck@mike-corbin.com
www.ev-sparrow.com

Model: Single passenger, 156-volt motor.

Top speed and range: 65 mph, 40- to 60-mile range

Price: \$12,900



Car: **Gizmo**

Manufacturer:

Neighborhood Electric Vehicle Co., Eugene, Ore.
541-687-5939

gizmo@nevco.com
www.nevco.com/

Model: Single passenger, 48-volt motor.

(A two-passenger model is to be released soon.)

Top speed and range: 43 mph, 25-mile range

Price: \$7,500



Car: **Bombardier NV**

Manufacturer:

Bombardier Inc., Montreal, Canada
888-638-5397

bombardier@recreation.bombardier.com

www.bombardiernv.com

Models: Sport-e, two passengers, 72-volt motor.

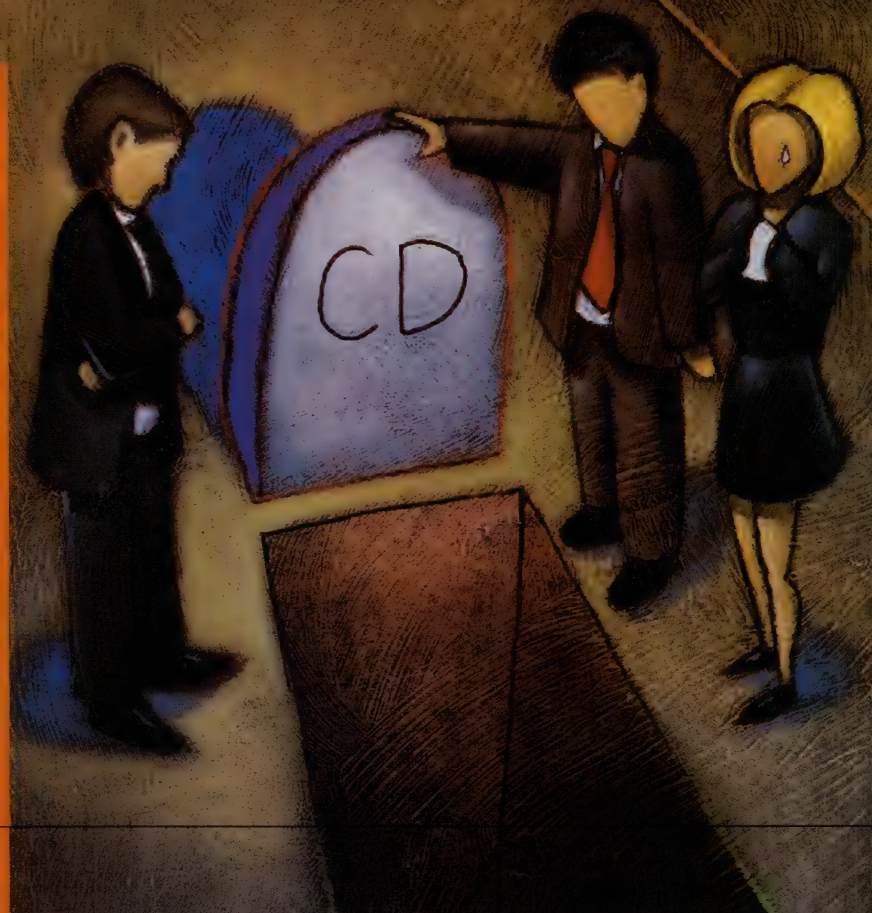
Class-e, two passengers, 72-volt motor.

Top speed and range: 25 mph, 30-mile range

Price: Starts at \$6,199



Taping was once regarded as such a pernicious evil that millions were spent on advertising campaigns warning cassette owners that they were killing music. What was merely murderous in the 1980s became apocalyptic in the 1990s, when a boom in used CD sales sent label heads scurrying for their pocket calculators. *Now what?*



MP3:

So who pays the piper?

Why the future of music—and the record industry—is probably safe

by Dave Thompson

It can't be easy being The Music Industry. There you are, presiding monolithically over a vast empire of entertainers, protecting their interests, safeguarding their future with barely a thought for your personal well-being, and every time you turn your back, technology launches another assault upon your fortress.

It's been happening forever. A century ago, the invention of gramophone recordings seriously threatened the Future Of Music As We Know It. If people could simply play the music of top artists in their own homes, the industry moguls angrily argued, live entertainment would

be dead within days.

Somehow the industry survived, prospered even. But then came radio, and again it was time to hit the corporate panic button. After all, if people could hear the hit songs for free, why would they bother buying records?

Into more recent times, Home Taping was once regarded as such a pernicious evil that millions were spent on advertising campaigns warning cassette owners that their activities were killing music.

And what was merely murderous in the '80s became positively apocalyptic in the early '90s, when a per-

ceived boom in used CD sales sent label heads and artists alike scurrying for their pocket calculators.

Of course, the ramifications of of home taping were, and are, shocking, but worse was to come. It was bad enough that CDs themselves were practically indestructible, thus allowing multiple purchasers to enjoy the same disc without any loss in sound quality. Suddenly, there was digital recording technology to contend with as well, ensuring that even 10th-generation copies would sound as pristine as the original. This prospect even resulted in a new law being enacted, the

Audio Home Recording Act, under which the manufacturers of digital recorders pay royalties into a couple of trust funds, set up for the benefit of artists who will inevitably suffer from the decline in sales.

But even these threats have paled into insignificance alongside another technological development, one which has not only nudged the entire modern music industry to the brink of the deepest precipice it has ever stared into, but could actually change the face of modern music itself.

And the worst of it is, it is readily, and affordably, available to anybody armed with a personal computer, and a deep-seated desire to wreak absolute havoc upon a defenseless \$12 billion recording industry.

The name of this blight? MPEG-1 Layer 3, or MP3 for short.

The principles are simple. Ever since 1991, when a German research lab, The Fraunhofer Institute, first developed the technology to convert and compress audio signals into easily downloadable files, the Internet has creaked beneath the weight of pirate-able music.

Anybody with the necessary equipment can add MP3s of their favorite music to their Web site; anybody with anything more than the most primitive computer can access it.

Neither do they require any kind of fancy software. MP3 players are easily, freely, available from countless software download sites. Portable players, allowing you to take the music out of your computer and play it anywhere you like, were introduced last October in the form of the Walkman-like Diamond Rio, and a handful of artists have even announced their own plans to join the MP3 revolution.

In early March, the ever-popu-

lar Ultimate Band List Internet site was utilizing MP3 technology to preview new albums by Hate Department, Julian Lennon, and Flupejac, all names certain to set the discerning listener's pulse racing.

At the same time, the unequivocally named MP3.com site was offering new, industry-approved MP3s from Tom Petty, Silage, Combustible Edison, and an Enya tribute orchestra.

And that's just a couple of the legal sites. Cross over to the other side of the tracks, and illegal operators offer even more tantalizing material. Again in early March, an *Entertainment Weekly* report on MP3s unearthed a collector who had recently added Dexy's "Come On Eileen" to a hoard of more than

If you can download 20 songs off the Web for free, what incentive do you have to buy 20 others from a record store?

500 files. Another site boasted a veritable smorgasbord of classic oldies station staples—Led Zeppelin, Lynyrd Skynyrd, The Beatles. And another still served up live and unreleased recordings culled from some of the hottest bootlegs around, all in super-clear digital sound.

All of which probably sounds too good to be true—and, of course, it is. Far from providing instant access to an unlimited treasure trove of truly great music, a

detailed perusal of the vast majority of sites swiftly boils over into a sensation akin to walking into the local chain store's music department, in search of a mint condition Beatles' Butcher cover.

And it just as quickly becomes apparent that the industry's stated fears have less to do with the nature of the material available for free downloading than with the more amorphous matter of the quantity of it.

Seasoned music industry observers, of course, will already know where this is all headed: toward an echo of the anti-bootlegging argument that still gets trotted out whenever that particular subject raises its hoary little head.

With the industry finally (if still exceedingly begrudgingly) acknowledging that the majority of bootleg buyers already own most of the official material available by their favorites, the complaint now is that if you purchase a bootleg by one artist, you will not buy the new album by another; that the chance discovery of John Entwistle and The Rat Race Choir's *Shakin' DC* 1987 CD-R will automatically prevent you from picking up the new LP by Britney Spears.

So it is with MP3s. If you can download 20 songs off the web for free, what plausible incentive do you have to buy 20 others from a record store?

Or worse still, visualize a time when every song ever released is available on the Internet free of charge; a time when all the relevant artwork, lyric sheets and poster inserts can be printed off on your home computer; and a time when every home has a CD-R recorder, spinning off little gold-colored copies of any album you like.

Neither are these fears as

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MP3 technology is available to anybody armed with a personal computer, and a deep-seated desire to wreak absolute havoc upon a defenseless \$12 billion industry.

groundless as they may sound. For evidence of how things could end up, after all, one only has to look at how the proliferation of lending libraries, coupled with the advent of high-quality color photocopiers, have irreparably damaged the book trade. Or, in other words, the handful of people out there with the time and inclination to get their books for free will get their CDs for free as well, and the rest of us will just carry on as usual.

Because right now even downloading unsigned indie rubbish and overplayed Eurochart fodder really isn't as easy as it all sounds. True, personal computers are advancing all the time, and "virtual activities" that were but a pipe dream a few years ago are now taking place in homes all over the world. CD-Rs, for example, have already completely rejuvenated the bootleg market, heaping irony onto injury by doing so at a time when the R.I.A.A. and its worldwide counterparts were finally appearing to be winning the war.

But still, the average household PC is not equipped for half the things that the Internet is capable of, and the average household PC user is not equipped for half the things the machine can do—like sitting around for the 30-40 minutes it takes to download a three-minute pop song with a 33,600 bps Internet connection; like wrestling with an unzipping program that creates petty conflicts of its own

design with the rest of the PC's already temperamental operating system; and like finally getting everything in place, only to discover that the MP3 had not been correctly archived at source, and does not, therefore, actually exist in any form that is accessible.

Suddenly, technology seems a lot less user-friendly (and a lot more time consuming) than simply getting into the car, driving to the mall, and grabbing the new Cher single off the rack there. Or waiting for it to come on the radio and taping it onto cassette (or mini-disc, or DAT, or DCC, or anything else you fancy).

And that is the reality of the so-called MP3 revolution. The potential is there, the possibilities are in place. But until every eventuality is covered by every aspect of the machinery (human and technological) required by the process, potential and possibility are all we have.

And no amount of inflammatory worded missives from the record companies, the R.I.A.A., or even the upholders of the Audio Home Recording Act, will change that fact—any more than they were able to block any of those previous homicidal assaults on their corporate well-being.

After all, the invention of the gramophone record, the development of radio, the advent of cassette tapes, the availability of digital sound recorders—they didn't turn out so badly in the end, did they?



load this



MusicMatch Jukebox 4.0 (www.musicmatch.com)

The free download serves up a player, library and unlimited near-CD quality recording (upgrades available). Easily linked to external sound sources, this is one of the friendliest players available. (Size 4000k)

BUGGY

(shareware AOL)

A very straightforward player, it appears on the desktop looking like a large beetle—the coolest player around if all you want to do is play. (Size 335259 bytes)

WinAmp 2.24

(www.winamp.com)

Fast and adaptable, WinAmp is a great player for beginners, and doesn't take up much space on your hard drive. (Size 540kb)

V1.1 LazerAmp Mp3 Player

(shareware AOL)

Another very straightforward, very simple player; one zip and you're rocking. (Size 503123 bytes)

AudioCatalyst 2.0

(www.audiocatalyst.com)

The demoware version does everything the full one does, in near-CD sound—which means (in its own words), it "rips, encodes and manages your MP3 collection in an eloquent and flexible manner." It's big, though. (Size 2.8 mb)

Real Jukebox

(www.real.com/realjukebox/index.html)

From the people who bring you RealEverything Else, RealJukebox is a basic, but very functional, player/recorder. Another good place for beginners to begin. (Size 5.6/2.5 mb)

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“Electronic commerce is fantastic, but sometimes you need someone to help you pick out a shirt...”

— Chris Miller, inside sales manager for WebLine, an online customer support “outsourcer”

Help!

I need somebody!

People need people, even on the Net

by Reva Basch

Are you ready for the next big advance in Internet technology? Relax; you won't have to upgrade your computer this time, or invest in specialized software. The latest wrinkle on the Net today is – get this – real live human beings. What a concept.

No doubt about it, the Internet is changing our lives. We can shop, bank and invest our money, look for work, book vacations and business trips, download software, hunt for information, and play online games around the clock, whenever we want, without moving from our chairs or relying on outside assistance. The Web makes it easy for us to help ourselves; it's empowering. That — and the instant gratification it offers — is a large part of its appeal. But the experience isn't always seamless.

Lost in the funhouse

Even seasoned Net denizens occasionally find themselves at a dead end, or going around in circles,

trapped in a cyber-hall of mirrors or a spooky, apparently deserted online mall. Web site navigation can be complex and confusing. Search engines don't always retrieve what you asked for. Product descriptions might not reveal the one key fact you need to know. Such shortcomings translate into bad news for companies trying to do business online. One recent survey showed that fewer than six percent of visitors to electronic commerce sites even attempt to make a purchase, and 67 percent of purchases-in-progress are abandoned in mid-stream. Another survey found that 35 percent of online shoppers would buy even more if they had the opportunity to interact with a knowledgeable salesperson while browsing. And those numbers don't reflect the hordes of potential customers who don't even make it through the front door, who are turned off from further exploration because they don't fully understand what the site is offering, or where to go once they get there. Sound familiar?

Most Web site creators try to anticipate common visitor dilemmas and address them with frequently-asked-questions lists

(FAQs) or automated e-mail responses offering detailed documentation and trouble-shooting tips. Yet FAQs and auto-replies only go so far. Suppose you have an infrequently-asked question, or a special requirement that the robot-mail message doesn't cover? If you're lucky, you'll find an e-mail link to Customer Service somewhere on the site. But let's be realistic: Not all online merchants read and respond to their e-mail as attentively as they do with telephone and in-person inquiries. It's a drag to have to wait half a day, let alone 48 hours or more, when you're ready to buy now. Some sites offer a toll-free phone number. But, by the time you log out of the Net, pick up the phone and call, and wait (most likely) on hold for the "next available representative," you've lost the advantage of immediacy and directness you might have gained from buying via the Web. What's the point? You might as well place your order over the phone while you're at it.

Somebody to talk to

The solution? Live, immediate electronic customer service, from

"In the olden days – two years ago – it was great if you were providing any kind of customer service online. But now, more and more, realtime service is what's expected?"

– Ken Young, director of communications, 1800Flowers.com

real people, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It's not a fantasy. Several customer support "outsourcers" — with names like PeopleSupport, LivePerson, Net2phone, and WebLine — currently provide behind-the-scenes software and, in some cases, trained staff — to online retailers.

"Electronic commerce is fantastic, but sometimes you need someone to help you pick out a shirt at the mall," said Chris Miller, inside sales manager for WebLine.

Other vendors, including such familiar brands as Lands' End, Eddie Bauer, and Hewlett-Packard, are reportedly getting into the realtime customer support act, too, along with dozens of retailers and service providers ranging from perfume purveyors to computer equipment manufacturers.

Live online support is particularly suited to complex products and services such as computer networks or investment portfolio management.

How does it work?

Getting help from a live person is pretty intuitive — as it should be. Typically, you simply click a button labeled something like "Live Help" or "Talk to Us Now." Even easier, a pop-up "Can I help you?" window might appear automatically as you're browsing the site. When you request help, a chat window opens with a greeting from your online rep. You type your question in the box below it, hit "send," and *voila* — instant customer support. Reps can answer your questions as they would on the phone, or lead you around the

site by "pushing" the Web page containing the specific product descriptions, technical instructions, or other information you need, directly to your browser. Or the URL might appear in the chat window as a live link, so a click takes you to the referenced page. At least one supplier of online customer support services offers Internet telephony — voice chat — as an alternative to text-based conversation. If audio support is here, can video be far behind?

Are you real?

Most companies that do business online already have a customer support staff trained for telephone service. With several firms offering a complete technology package to put those reps to work online, you'd expect the Web to be crawling with helpful support people. That's not quite the way it is — at least not yet. When we surveyed the scene recently, most of the client companies touted in news releases and on outsource firms' Web sites displayed no "Live Help" button or other means of getting to realtime customer support. Others offered only limited customer support hours, not the 24/7 coverage touted by the provider. One pop-up window that advertised live help "now" produced a familiar-sounding message: "No operators are currently available. However, if you wish to leave a message, we will respond to your inquiry as soon as we can." Maybe the rep was on break. A long break. Where realtime help exists, the resources seem spread pretty thin; we ran

into the same guy on one shift at half a dozen different sites managed by the same outsourcer. Though courteous and trying to be helpful, he clearly didn't have an in-depth knowledge of all the companies, let alone products, he represented. The ideal solution would seem to be a blend of the vendors' own knowledgeable support staff with the technology tools already developed by others. Perhaps we'll see more consistent, high-quality assistance as companies continue to move to the Web and assign as high a priority to e-commerce and other kinds of online transactions as they do to their "real world" business.

Quick answers from real people

Some companies have already made the leap to developing their own real-people online customer support, and some are making plans to do so.

1800Flowers.com was among the first e-commerce sites to go online and among the first to offer customers the ability to chat with real people who could answer their questions, according to Ken Young, director of communications.

"As customers become more e-commerce savvy, the bar keeps getting raised," Young said. "At first it was great that you just had a Web site. In the olden days — two years ago — it was great if you were providing any kind of customer service online. But now, more and more, realtime service is what's expected. If you're not providing it, and your competition is, you run the risk of turning your customers off."

1800Flowers has always had a quick turnaround time — within an hour or two — on replying to e-mail. But that still wasn't fast enough, Young said. By the time the e-mail reply came through, the

potential customer might have turned off the computer and gone to bed, after deciding to buy Aunt Mary's birthday gift elsewhere.

Since last October, 1800Flowers.com customers have been able to chat in real time, keyboard to keyboard, with a live service rep. If they prefer, they can pick up the phone and ask questions about their online order.

eBay plans to "roll out substantial enhancements to our realtime presence on our support boards within the next several months," according to Matt Bannick, vice-president of customer support. The auction site now has customer service representatives who "float" among the member-to-member chat boards, the category boards and the question-and-answer boards.

eBay already has added more e-mail customer support people to its recently opened Salt Lake City office. "Our customers tell us clearly that personalization is one of the most important — if not the most important — element of our correspondence with them," Bannick said.

Every six weeks, eBay flies in online customers from around the country to tell online service representatives, as well as eBay management, what they could be doing to better serve customers. Online, "you don't get the level of connect-edness you get in the real world, and this is our way of overcoming it, to make sure our people appreciate the customer at the other end and what we need to do to serve them," Bannick said.

Eddie Bauer will provide live chat at its online site late in the fourth quarter of this year, according to Mark Staudinger, divisional vice-president of interactive media. At first, most Internet sites "really focused on presentation and performance," but, as the online transaction loads increase, the

"next big challenge will be offering the right service components" to provide quick response to customers, he said. Online keyboard chat will be part of a "complementary set" of customer service tools, which will continue to include phone support as well.

Back to the future

Putting people on the other side of the "help" desk isn't a revolutionary idea. Despite all the talk about intelligent agents or 'bots (short for robots) who act on your behalf Web-wide, real intelligence — the kind that resides in human beings — trumps artificial intelligence every time. Back before the Web, an online research service called Telebase addressed the customer support problem by inviting users to type "SOS" whenever they were stuck.

Almost instantly, a professionally-trained (and sometimes sleep-deprived) librarian would respond and, in an early version of chat, suggest refinements to your search query to make it more effective. Contemporary search aids such as Ask Jeeves (www.ask.com) and About.com use real people to help answer your questions, too.

The Net has always been about people. The scientists and scholars who were its earliest inhabitants quickly got into the habit of helping each other, providing signposts and sharing information. The vast and sprawling collection of discussion areas known as Usenet newsgroups (check www.deja.com for a glimpse into this free-wheeling world) has always been a rich source of expertise, information and advice on everything from comic books to computer games, mountain bikes to mutual funds to model aviation.

More recently, sites like eBay, iVillage, and Salon.com have com-

bined, in varying proportions, a newsgroup-like sense of online community and information-sharing, with the opportunity to shop and conduct other kinds of business online.

Your most valuable customer support might well come from the friends and colleagues who work and play beside you in cyberspace.

After all, they're your online neighbors, interested in many of the same things that you are, often highly experienced, and motivated not to sell you something, but to help find a solution that works. This blend of formal and informal support mechanisms — the way the Net has operated since the very beginning — could turn out to be the next big thing as well. ☐

Now appearing...

Experience live online support for yourself at one of these Web sites:

Ceramics 4 Sale

(ceramic products and supplies):
www.ceramics4sale.com

Find/SVP

(research reports and services):
www.findsvp.com

FiveStarAdvantage (online mall):
www.fivestaradvantage.com

Fortune Datastore

(business information): <http://commerce.pathfinder.com/cgi-bin/offer.cgi?store=foownurl001>

MGM Store (movie collectibles):
www.mgm.com/cgi-bin/store.html

1800DayTrade.com (stock trading):
www.1800daytrade.com

1800FLOWERS (flower and gift delivery): www.1800flowers.com

Round Table Group (management training):
www.round.table.com/learning/

Specially Made for



Changing the face of Barbie

Can't find your dream doll?
Make her at
www.barbie.com

by Sharon Korbeck

What technological breakthrough has changed the face of a 20th century icon?

It's nothing quite as complicated as cloning, gender selection or laser vision correction. Mattel's My Design, an online program located at www.barbie.com, lets kids, collectors and aspiring designers personalize a doll of their dreams — their very own “friend of Barbie.”

Parents can name the doll after their own children, which is where much of the program's value lies. Visitors to the site also choose from various hair, eye and skin colors, dress their Barbie, and create her

persona from a list of options (does Barbie like astronomy, boys, or surfing the Web?).

The last step is to either print and save the design or, if desired, order the doll for \$40. The doll's name appears on a slip of paper on the box, turning online playtime into the perfect present for a little one.

“It was very unique for us to use the Internet in that way,” said Lisa McKendall, Mattel's director of marketing and public relations.

Overall traffic to Barbie's site has increased by 400 percent since the addition of My Design in November 1998, according to McKendall. She did not provide figures, however, on the number of hits www.barbie.com has received, and said Mattel never discloses production numbers on

any Barbie line.

Is the program a success? That comes down to its users and their reaction to the dolls, which seems to be mixed.

My Design's limited customization capability makes it easy for Mattel to avoid production nightmares, but it also leaves some buyers frustrated. While pleased with



the quality, they feel \$40 is too much to pay for a slightly altered play doll in a plain package.


Another segment of the population — collectors — is unlikely to embrace My Design dolls, especially for investment purposes.

Because each My Design creation is basically the same doll in the same package (with minor, insignificant variances), the potential exists for millions to be produced. That creates poor odds that the dolls will increase in value. Instead collectors are likely to stick with Mattel's line of collector edition Barbies, which starts at \$40.

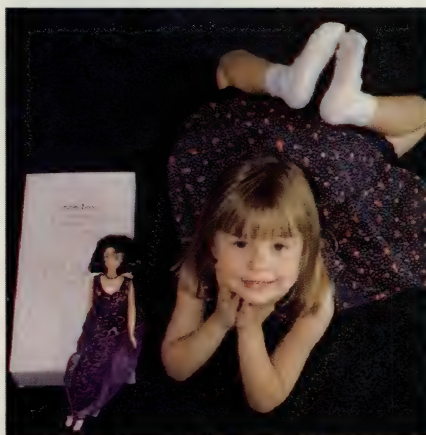
Still, parents love giving My Design to their children, and children love receiving the personalized gift. And the design process has become smoother and quicker, with fewer computer snags and easier click-throughs.

"One of the great things about

the Internet is that it is always changing," McKendall said.

Since this year marks Barbie's 40th birthday, the timing was perfect for a little change — and a facelift, maybe? 

Sharon Korbeck is editor of Toy Shop magazine.



Abby Gerbers and her My Design Barbie share their name, eye color and hobbies.

Surfing with Barbie

If a strange pink glow surrounds your computer, you may be visiting too many Barbie sites. It's easy to do, and while some are quite well done, others are littered with unfounded gossip and rumors. It can be fun to dish between collectors, just know whether or not the information is verified.

www.barbie.com: The official source for authoritative information on Barbie, targeted at parents, collectors and children. Look here for accurate information on Mattel's newest lines, but not for secondary market information.

www.flash.net/~dsquard7: One of the best sites we visited, its strength is in the dozens of valuable links. Want to order a Barbie book or video? This site links you directly to amazon.com. A quick link to FAO Schwarz will picture

that store's high-end exclusive Barbies. A link to eBay puts buyers in direct contact with thousands of Barbies for sale daily.

barbie dolls.about.com: Another superior site, brought to life by the folks at about.com. Sarah Locker is the Barbie expert, providing info. for beginners and more dedicated fans. She covers the FAQs swiftly, dispensing jargon that newbie collectors can use to sound "in the know."

www.toad.net/~anardone/: Want a fresh new look for Barbie? The All Dolled Up site offers "one-of-a-kind" designs. Not graphically stunning, it does offer Barbie fans a source for re-rooting doll hair and for facial repaints.

www.odyssee.net/~tesla/home.html: Canadian fans of Barbie will

find references to clubs, magazines and shows based in their country. The info. on Barbie Goes to Canada is not new to the veteran collector, but it is a quick-and-easy reference for new enthusiasts, and includes a timeline of Barbie milestones.

www.dollpage.com: One of the more active chat rooms for Barbie fans exists at The Doll Page. The Pink Chat room is an active and opinionated arena; adult content, however, can make the site inappropriate for youngsters.

www.geocities.com/FashionAvenue/4060/: Consider yourself an eavesdropper? The Barbie Newbie Page tends to be gossip central with its "Babs Talk Babbler." Get in on chats with worldwide collectors and Barbie fans. Be aware, however, that the gossip on this site is often unfounded, unverified rumor.

Heard Butterfly Art Barbie was recalled? Look to the bids & pieces section for the real story.

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VOTE FOR

In the 1992 Presidential campaign, before **"Internet"** was as much a household word as "blue dress," Ross Perot proposed creating an **"electronic town hall,"** allowing Joe Citizen from Anywhere, USA, to participate in the democratic process through a computer or some other sophisticated telecommunications device. Among the political cognoscenti, Perot's notion produced, primarily, chortles.

Yet here we are facing the Year 2000 presidential race and Perot's vision, a version of it anyway, has become reality. This year, the Internet may serve as a more conventional, top-down method of campaigning, rather than increasing participatory democracy, as Perot hoped. In any event, the first election of the new millennium is already the first in which candidates will use the Internet as a powerful campaign tool. We're still more than a year away from the election, and every major contender—and most of the minor ones—already has a Web site up and humming along.

"They're starting to take the Web more seriously. Everybody's jumping into this now," observes James Gordon Meek, Editor of the irreverent, political Webzine *Gridlock and Load* (<http://www.gridlockmag.com>). As the first "cyber-journalist" credentialed to cover the White House (and Capitol Hill), he has been observing the online political scene for as long as it has existed.

"But if you look at these sites," Meek continues, "you see how godawfully amateur most of [them] are."

The problem, Meek believes, is that politicians are cautious about jumping onto the Internet because

it's an area they can't control. Nonetheless, the level of Net awareness has multiplied geometrically since the previous presidential campaign. The Internet has gone from an afterthought to one of the first elements assem-

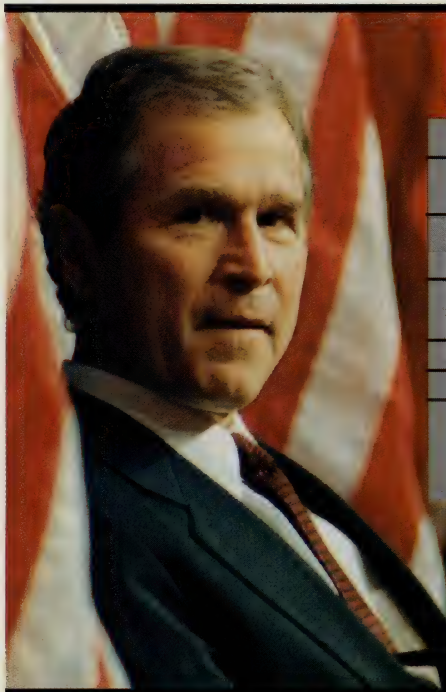
reportcard

Al Gore	
URL:	http://www.algore2000.com/
Ease of use:	The first item on the navigation menu (after Gore's "welcome message") is a site map. Not a good sign.
Information Value:	More propaganda than information, including a RealVideo movie of "the Al Gore Story." Uh oh.
Interest level:	It's Al Gore. What do you expect? Do we really need to follow every stop on his "Announcement Tour?" ZZZZZzzzz.
Professionalism:	Very high. On par with many top corporate sites. Maybe that's the problem.
Overall Grade:	B-
Summary:	For a guy who "took the initiative in creating the Internet," Gore delivers little of the "stuff-you-can't-get-anywhere-else" value that has made the Web attractive from the day Netscape 1.0 debuted. One notable exception, his "Electronic Town Hall" (offered with no apologies to Ross Perot), in which Gore responds to (one assumes) carefully selected queries from ord'nry folks jus' like you 'n' me.

ME.COM

Can the Internet
put Al Gore in the
White House?

by Jon Vankin



reportcard

George W Bush

URL:	http://www.georgewbush.com/
Ease of use:	The left-side menu bar is a tad lengthy, but otherwise the site is suitably intuitive.
Information Value:	That lengthy menu means there's plenty on the site. Packed with info.
Interest level:	Bush has often been criticized for being amorphous – and it shows on his rather bland site.
Professionalism:	Solid, well-constructed.
Overall Grade:	B+
Summary:	Bush knows what to do with a Web site – use it to position yourself as the high-tech candidate. He hammers on his tech-positive policies from the top of the home page, proving he's no chip off the ol' block. His dad had trouble navigating the UPC reader at the supermarket. The Texas governor has also hooked up with Texas-based Broadcast.com to stream video of certain speeches.

bled by the various campaign committees.

"In the Clinton-Gore campaign in '96, I wasn't brought on until August of '96, just a few months before the voting," says Lynn Reed, who served as Webmaster for the president's successful re-election bid. Now the head of Net Politics Group, a political consulting firm that specializes in pretty much what its name says, Reed this time around commands the on-line division of Sen. Bill Bradley's presidential campaign. "I've been a part of the team since before the exploratory committee was announced," she says.

Texas Governor George W. Bush, the early Republican favorite, was a relative latecomer to online campaigning. Though his site had been up for several months, Bush didn't get around to

hiring a full-time Webmaster until mid-July, according to his communications guru David Beckwith.

Ironically, though, it was Bush's campaign that has generated the only real news to come out of the



"It was just a total ripoff. If you read into it I'm sure you'd get the idea that this is not the official site."

—David Beckwith, communications guru for the George W. Bush campaign

on-line portion of the campaign so far.

First, the Bush campaign entered into a battle with an attack site, gwobush.com, which mimicked the official site's design. Rather than run the latest Bush endorsement list or position paper, however, the site carried allegations that Bush once

indulged with some gusto in certain controlled substances.

"It was just a total ripoff," says Beckwith. "The average person just trying to find our site could not possibly see the difference, at least from the outward appearance. I just don't think that's right. It's totally deceptive. Now, if you read into it and read that Bush was an admitted cocaine user, I'm sure you'd get the idea that this is not the official site."

The bad-boy anti-Bush site led to an official complaint to the Federal Election Commission by the Bush campaign and also elicited one of the governor's more quotable quotes, when he said, describing what he thought of the attack site, "there are limits to freedom."

Then Bush's campaign began purchasing domain names — including such winners as "bushsucks.com" —

in an attempt to corral the potential opposition and cut it off at the pass. Reportedly, the campaign shelled out as much as \$300,000 in its dot-com shopping spree.

"But one thing we learned," says Beckwith. "You can't get them all." In other words, the cyber-political Ralph Kramden types dreaming up the next off-color variation of "bush.com" are wasting brainpower. "We won't be buying any more," declares Beckwith.

For political junkies who look forward to the next election the way a *Star Wars* freak quivers with anticipation for *Episode Two*, the dozen candidate Web sites offer a much-craved fix in the early, sleepy season of the campaign. But is on-line stumping anything more than an amusing diversion? Or will the year 2000 mark the first time a presidential election has turned on a candidate's presence in cyberspace?

Whether the Internet can — at

The quote heard 'round the Net

On March 9, Al Gore told CNN's Wolf Blitzer, "During my service in the United States Congress, I took the initiative in creating the Internet." Even if that were true, you wouldn't know it from his rather drab Web site. In any case, the remark got Gore's Internet campaign off to a bad start. It even let Dan Quayle get the better of him, allowing Quayle to get off the zinger, "If Gore created the Internet, I invented spell-check." Well, maybe if Gore wins the nomination he'll choose Vincent Cerf as his running mate. While no one person "created" the Internet, Cerf was probably more responsible than anyone for conceiving the technology back in 1973.

least in the 2000 election — actually win additional votes for a candidate, remains an open question. The historical data simply

doesn't exist. The closest thing to verification that online campaigning can be effective is the unheralded study "E-Voter 98", co-authored by Karen Jagoda of the Washington-based company Turtleback Interactive.

Jagoda's study zeroed in on the New York governor's race in 1998. It found that underdog challenger Peter Vallone, the only candidate in the race to make use of the Net by purchasing banner ads on the *New York Times* Web site, was indeed able to shift voter perceptions of incumbent governor George Pataki. Among those who viewed the banner ads, which portrayed Pataki as dangerously far to the ideological right, the governor's favorability ratings dropped seven percent and his "unfavorable" rating leaped by roughly the same amount. The banner ads, according to the study, smacked Pataki with a 14 percent plunge in approval rating.

Unfortunately, the study also



reportcard

Bill Bradley

URL:	http://www.billbradley.com/
Ease of use:	Good. Simple but effective use of framed nav bar.
Information Value:	The only campaign site to include the candidate's financial disclosure forms, making opposition research easy. Got to give him credit for that.
Interest level:	About average. Bradley himself is only marginally more charismatic than Gore, so his site gets credit for trying.
Professionalism:	Slick! Even includes annoying pop-up windows.
Overall Grade:	B
Summary:	Bradley shows a little Net-savvy by converting what had been his "personal" site to his campaign central.

The old site sported photos of Bradley and his wife that looked as if they dated from his days with the Knicks. Fortunately, those have been dumped in favor of more recent photos, and the site has received a full-scale overhaul (though the home page contains a sepia-toned shot of the pudgy-cheeked childhood Bill).

reportcard

Elizabeth Dole

URL:	http://www.edole2000.org/
Ease of use:	Clunky, text-heavy home page makes this site daunting from the start.
Information Value:	The site is largely a collection of press releases, so it succeeds in getting Dole's views across.
Interest level:	Of course, if no one bothers to click through two dozen or so press releases, no one's going to learn what Dole's views are after all.
Professionalism:	Better than GeoCities level, but still, any college kid could have put this one together.
Overall Grade:	C-
Summary:	The blandly smiling Dole, blouse buttoned to the larynx, gazing from the top of page after page of text links does little to inspire or motivate. The site gives the feel of existing simply because Dole knew she "should" have a Web site, but her apparent boredom with the medium is contagious.

found that the ads were not effective in raising voter awareness of Vallone himself, leading Jagoda to conclude that *negative* advertising works on the Web — as it seems to everywhere.

While none of the candidates' consultants whom we talked to would reveal upcoming strategies, it seems certain that as the campaign heats up, at least some will make banner-ad buys on popular sites (the Vallone ads were carried on the *New York Times* on the Web).

"Does this mean we're going to see Bush ads on eBay?" wonders Jagoda. "The big problem I see is that the people who are selling ads for Web sites don't know how to sell political ads. And the people who are buying the ads don't know how to buy online."

By the 2004 election, with advances in technology that will make the Internet much more accessible than it is now, the entire Net campaign outlook could change. But at this nascent stage of Net politics, online campaigning has three noteworthy uses:

- Organizing and communicating with campaign volunteers.
- Raising money.
- Conveying the candidate's positions and persona to the public without relying on the media to do it first.

Conspicuously absent from that inventory — winning votes. All 12 candidates — two Democrats and 10 Republicans — have already begun deploying the tools of the Internet. Swaying voters has, at least so far, been only an incidental side-effect of online media. Fundraising, organization and (for lack of a better word) "spin," are still the focus of candidate sites and also of candidate e-mail, which is still a more important use of the Net than Web sites.

"We have over 15,000 people who receive our campaign updates twice a week," says Al Gore campaign spokesman Roger Salazar. "The use of the Internet to sign people up has been very helpful. I can't imagine somebody sending 15,000 faxes or 15,000 pieces of mail twice a week. And we expect

to have many, many more by the time we're done."

"Our campaign considers the Internet to be an invaluable resource for both tracking support and informing those who have decided to join our effort," says Jonathan Baron, communications director for the campaign of former vice-president Dan Quayle. "It's a great way for Quayle team members around the country to constantly check in. So it's an extremely powerful communication tool that has yielded significant results already at this point in the campaign."

Candidate Web sites also function as potent fundraising tools. According to Reed, the Bradley campaign has already brought in \$200,000 through its Web site. Bradleyites can either give to their man online by punching in their trusty credit card numbers, or download a form which they can then snail mail in along with snail-cash in the form of a personal check. The courts ruled earlier this year that funds raised over the Internet do, in fact, count toward federal matching fund totals, giving the candidates extra incentive to milk their Web sites for every possible dollar.

The Quayle site features what amounts to a campaign contributor pyramid scheme: "Dan Quayle's 21st Century Club." Clicking on a banner that urges visitors to "send a message to the establishment insiders" calls up a personal message authored by the candidate himself, in which he details his plan.

"I know for most folks \$50 or \$100 is too much to consider giving to a presidential campaign. Instead, I am asking you to consider giving \$21 and recruiting 10

of your friends or family members to do the same." This entitles one to join the "21st Century Club," though the precise benefits of club membership are never quite spelled out on the site, except for the chance to "join thousands of Americans who want to help Dan Quayle send a message to the world that as we enter the 21st century the era of corruption is over."

As candidates make ever-more sophisticated use of their Web sites, however, the Internet may supplant print and broadcast media as the candidates' vehicle of choice for getting the right "spin" to the public.

"These cats are getting around the media filter with their Web sites," says Meek. "They're getting their news, with their spin on whatever it is they're talking about, to the public. They're writing news-type stories for their Web sites, completely bypassing me and my colleagues who may be quaking in their boots a little

"They're starting to take the Web more seriously. Everybody's jumping into this now."

—James Gordon Meek, Editor of the Webzine *Gridlock and Load*

bit. In the years to come, people [will increasingly] go to candidate Web sites to get information, instead of going to people who they no longer view as objective sources of information, which is the media."

The candidates' strategists may have realized that potential sooner than Meek imagines.

"There's still going to be a filter, but it's certainly more wide-open than it has been in the past," says Bradley strategist Reed. "We still need the media to let people know that we're out there, but then I think they turn to us for additional information. You may have seen on the evening news or read

in your local newspaper that Bill Bradley gave a speech on gun control. But the only place you're going to get the full text of that speech is to come to the Web site."

"More and more people are relying on the Internet more aggressively as an information resource," echoes Salazar of the Gore campaign. "It is a good way for us to get the vice president's message in a format that we can tell them what it is. It's unfiltered almost."

But that type of unfiltered information is simply campaign spin doctoring. We're changing one type of propaganda for another.

"I could see a Bill Clinton-type in the future, instead of going on *60 Minutes* to say that all these stories about Gennifer Flowers are B.S., this guy may just put up something on his Web site," says Meek. "The Web site may be a more important vehicle to get the message out than *60 Minutes*." □



reportcard

Dan Quayle

URL:	http://www.quayle.org/
Ease of use:	Straightforward and simple, just like the image the candidate is attempting to craft for himself.
Information Value:	Decent, with daily campaign updates and clear statements on Quayle's basic positions.
Interest level:	Not much on the home page compels you to drill down, but worth the occasional check to keep up to date on Mr. Potatoe Head's quest for the White House.
Professionalism:	Workmanlike.
Overall Grade:	B-
Summary:	The odd thing about Quayle's site is that, visually, it looks oddly similar to Bush's site, though the dominant color is red, not blue. The site's overall thrust, to position the former senator, vice-president and wealthy scion of a publishing dynasty as some kind of populist outsider, is kind of laughable.

Try a retro barbecue

Summertime's fading fast, the dog days are more bark than bite at this point, and you're pondering one more swingin' soiree before the snow flies. For the last late-summer blow-out of the millennium, think kitschy swizzle sticks, think '50s festive-ware ... Think *retro barbeque*.

Who doesn't love twistin' by the pool in the lavender late-summer twilight? And if you've already drained the pool, you can always tango by tiki torchlight while keeping an eye on the burgers. But first, spend a lunch hour on the Net getting the bash booked up — you have technological advantages that grillers of decades past never knew. When that's done, you can start perfecting your limbo routine.

Invite the guests. Send vintage postcards to announce your event. You can buy them at auction sites. www.iPrint.com can help you out in a pinch — design your own invites online. Your friends will appreciate your thoughtfulness and your boss (should you invite him) will be impressed by your organizational skills — not a bad idea to plant in his head before that salary review.

Get the goods. Splurge in the food and drink department. The classic barbecue choice is pork, but a little retro re-styling will get the menu up to date. Serve up veggie kabobs or tuna steak for your more health-conscious friends. Better yet, fire up the grill and have guests take turns — all the better to avoid splatters on your "Kiss the Cook" apron. Give your guests at

least three choices — provide marinades, sauces, or rubs from sweet to sour. Check our section on sites with recipes so good you'll be able to pass them off as old family favorites.

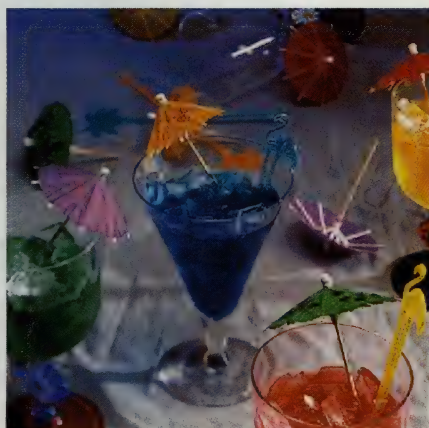
After you've set the grocery list, get the goods to your door fast. Try www.greatfood.com for gourmet food while www.netgrocer.com will deliver the basics. Last but not least, don't forget the drinks. Quenchers can range from smoothies to milk shakes to cocktails at full force. Keep it fizzy and fruity — and have lots of ice on hand.

Deck out the pad. Retro decorating can be achieved with a couple of clicks. Search the auctions — try keywords like "retro" or "lounge". A recent search found the following kitschy kitsch up for sale: a red metal platter depicting a

smiling chef and his grill (winning bid: \$26) a vintage tablecloth with pictures of shish-ka-bob, and a cocktail shaker covered with pink elephants (high bid: \$91). Just think of the possibilities. Don't forget the pink plastic flamingo.

Get some lounge wear, daddy-o. The auction sites can also help you with this one. May we suggest a smoking jacket? A big straw hat? Check www.alohaland.com for the best Hawaiian shirts at just 50 bucks a pop. Sift through vintage sites such as www.510vintage.com. They take orders online and ship; just keep a measuring tape handy for on-the-phone fitting.





Get those toes tapping.

Nothing goes with good food like good music. You could mess with all those MP3 files or set up your Real



Cocktails and Kitschy Canapes (\$9.99 each), guaranteed to turn even the sourest party sweet. Harrison offers drink and appetizer recipes that are out of this world, and each book comes with accessories to make presentation that much easier.



So there you have it — the last big backyard bash of the last summer of this rapidly waning millennium. Style from the past blends with the technology of today.

Celebrate the best of the century and kiss the summertime goodbye.



Player jukebox to download eight hours of music.

You could also hit www.stratolite.com. Think of it — music delivered painlessly to your desktop speakers. No annoying sound system to set up. No rifling through your CD collection for those golden oldies. Click in and your jones for tunes will be fulfilled.

Kitschy hints in print.

If you're in need of more inspiration, there are books geared to the retro barbecue interest. Push your party into the stratosphere with the helpful hints of Babs Harrison in her two new titles from Smithmark Publishing, *Kitschy*

spicy tips LAY ON THE SAUCE

Hundreds of sites offer BBQ and grilling sauces. A few to impress the guests: Black River Bar-B-Que is the source for their Famous Basting Sauce and "Jump Back Jack Hot Sauce" (\$3.50 plus s&h) at www.blackriverbbq.com. Jerry Elliott sells pig and bbq sauce (16 oz. for \$3.95), just "click the pigs" at www.pigsauce.com. Get Pam's Peaked Mountain Vermont Maple Barbecue Sauce (\$5.25 + s&h per pint) at www.wolfsonenterprises.com/bbq.html. Have an entire bbq experience online at T-Bone & Chef Eddy's site, a destination in itself at www.almostfamous.com. Find HOT Almost Famous Barbecue Sauce (\$4.95 12.7 oz. bottle).

A DASH HERE, A PINCH THERE

Check these for tips, recipes, ideas, and even sidedishes: www.bbq.com — Giant resource on grilled goodies.

www.culinarycafe.com/Barbeque.html — BBQ is just one of the Cafe's many specialties.

<http://www.ponyexpress.net/~gasgiant/recipes.html> — Down home recipes you can't find just anywhere. www.cooking.com — Huge site with recipes, tips, and accessories on BBQ and more.

HONEY, WHERE'S THE SPATULA?

Grill accessories across the board. A good chef is always prepared. www.ironworks-gasgrills.com — Find basting bottles (\$6.50 if you buy a sauce to go with it) to cookbooks — it's a barbecue haven. www.grill-smith.com/products.htm — Grab a Deluxe Kabob Basket for under \$30 or check out the Cowboy Boot Dinner Bell. [//new.chattanooga.net/grill](http://new.chattanooga.net/grill) — It's a Griller's World, we just live in it. Find rotisserie kits to grill covers here.



Blue criss-cross top and matching blue capri pants by Herve Leger, Paris.

**Is Natasha Henstridge
the new millennium's
first true Glamour Girl?**

Glamour

Hollywood reinvents smoldering elegance

by Trevor J. Miller

"Beauty, to me, is about being comfortable in your own skin. That and a kick-ass red lipstick."

—Gwyneth Paltrow

Silk stockings, cocktail hours, slinky women — as the planet takes a collective glance back at its hundred years in the sun, classic Hollywood glamour is suddenly looking like one of our more enduring inventions. The notion of smoldering elegance, even if it carries a heavy patina of glitz, has become a highly cherished — and highly profitable — concept.

The idea of glamour has been waylaid more than once in recent decades. The rise of *Charlie's Angels* comes to mind. Feathered hair didn't help, and neither did Spandex or leg-warmers. Now people are looking further back; and when you take a '40s notion of infatuated fandom and combine it with the momentous torque of the Internet, you get a market for assorted glamour and glitz memorabilia riding the crest of a very large wave.

Marilyn Monroe's fishnet stockings in *Bus Stop* recently sold for a cool 10 grand at Collector's Ransom 6, a Hollywood auction in which bidders took part online via Amazon.com. An engraved Max Factor compact belonging to Lana Turner sold for \$977. Rita Hayworth's signed William Morris contract from 1951 brought \$400.

Even Madonna's bustier from the video *Who's That Girl* recently

took in \$12,650 at Sotheby's.

"Prices for all glamour collectibles are shooting up," said Kevin Martin, owner of Piece of the Past Inc., a Palm Beach, Fla., retail and wholesale auction house.

"Glamour collecting was a niche market, but now there's a very broad collecting market with some very deep pockets chasing it."

In an age defined by technological supremacy and mass-market consumerism, millennial nostalgia has reached critical mass. People are suddenly seeking tangible, *resaleable* proof of glamour's most perfect incarnations, in the form of autographs, posters and 8x10 glossies from bygone days.

The Internet is increasingly the first place they look. And a stroll through cyberspace provides quick evidence that the future of glamour is in good hands.

Glamour for the ages

Perhaps TV's Lois Lane — Teri Hatcher — summed it up best in E! Online. "If it weren't for the Internet, I'd be on the back of bedroom doors or something. That's

what it was before. I guess this is the '90s version."

Still, the '90s Glamour Girl shares only visceral similarities with her 1950s counterpart. Gone are the gooey headshots, the Machiavellian managers and endorsements for vacuous living.

Instead we have Pamela Anderson Lee producing her own TV show, supermodels like Kathy Ireland creating their own lines of fashion apparel, even Demi Moore as one of the forces behind the *Austin Powers* franchise. Smart women. Women who are instrumental in the areas of finance and commerce.

They're straight to the point, pulling no punches about themselves or the world they inhabit. But as Demi Moore told Reuters, "There's still a negative attitude in our society towards women who use a strength that's inherent — their femininity — in any way that might be considered seductive."

Contemporary Glamour Girls are often wives and mothers. They project real images of real life, which is perhaps another reason for their new-found popularity. These are women who have travelled, both physically and emotionally.

Like Gwyneth Paltrow told *Variety*, "Beauty, to me, is about being comfortable in your own skin. That and a kick-ass red lipstick."

These women have travelled, both physically and emotionally.

Levity aside, our very own Natasha Henstridge has exactly the qualities that make for the quintessential modern Glamour Girl. She has gone from Sci-fi diva to earth-mother without missing a beat. She finds humor in a business often associated with hard-nosed sobriety.

In fact, she enters 2000 as perhaps the perfect interface between the rarified Hollywood of yore and the hard-edged movie industry as it exists today. Demure and street-smart, she immediately brings to mind elegant stars of days gone by — Grace Kelly, say, or Audrey Hepburn. Henstridge is part Holly Golightly, part *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, with the most disarming shimmer of *Moon River* thrown in for good measure.

"You can't miss it; she's a goddess," said Dennis Hensley, journalist for *Movieline* magazine. "I interviewed her at Starbucks at 10 in the morning ... glamour and elegance personified, even at that hour."

Of course, she's best known for her role as the lethal, sex-crazed alien in *Species*. But the high-octane nude scenes and action flicks with the likes of Jean-Claude Van Damme are likely a thing of the past. The turn of the millennium marks several new departures for Henstridge; she's traded in hard knocks and steamy sci-fi for high comedy and a home life.

Henstridge kicked off her modeling career in Paris at age 14, after a profoundly normal early childhood in Alberta, Canada. Within a year, she had appeared on the cover of *French Cosmopolitan*, followed by a succession of cover shots for fashion magazines around the world. She followed that up with commercials for Old Spice and Oil of Olay, among others.

Then she got the call from Hollywood.

"I picked some of the most ridiculous movies, because I thought I wasn't good enough to work with good people."

"I asked my agent to send me out on movie calls," she said.

"Basically, I got the *Species* audition right after I started...so I packed a bag and moved out to L.A. I was ready for something new, and I thought, why not — I'll give it my best shot."

Henstridge's early days in Tinseltown weren't necessarily the stuff of Hollywood fantasies. As soon as the movie finished, there was a bit of a, well, lull.

"I was living in a place where I didn't really know anybody, except the people I'd just worked with. It

was a bit of a shock in the beginning. L.A. is a hard place to make good friends. It's not like you run into people on the street. You have to plan things. And then I wasn't the best person with schedules."

She persevered, but sometimes it takes more than talent and patience to ride the runaway train that is movie stardom. Negotiating the tabloid press and lean times are as much a part of the game as being in front of the camera.

"People expect something. You're hired to do a job and you're expected to do it. That's where the pressure comes from. I've made so many bad decisions, decisions based on fear of not being good enough. I picked some of the most ridiculous movies, because I thought I wasn't good enough to work with good people. Since then I've caught onto a little secret — the better the people you work with the better you come across."

The essential Natasha Henstridge

- Born in Newfoundland, Canada, 1974.
- Raised in Fort McMurray, Alberta, Canada.
- Left home at age 14 to pursue modeling career in Paris.
- Landed on cover of *French Cosmopolitan* magazine at age 15.
- Appeared in commercials for Old Spice, Oil of Olay, and Lady Stetson.
- Made film debut in *Species*, playing ravenous, oft-naked, oft-deadly alien-human hybrid in search of a mate.
- Married actor Damian Chapa in August, 1995. Divorced the following year.
- Son Tristan born in 1998.

Next for Natasha: A Bruce Willis comedy

Natasha's latest venture, *The Whole Nine Yards*, is a screwball comedy with Bruce Willis, Matthew Perry, Rosanna Arquette and Harland Williams.

"I play the estranged wife of Bruce Willis. He's a hitman who got out of prison and has refused the witness protection program. Bruce moves next door to a dentist, played by Matthew Perry. But the dentist's wife is crazy and there's a price on the Bruce Willis character's head. Matthew's character falls for me...It takes you through a lot of funny, bizarre, dangerous situations.

"Matthew's a riot. He's got so much energy. He's so dedicated to his work. He just wants to make people laugh. He's interested in what the fans want. Even what the people on the set want...You realize with some actors, they don't get 'there' for no reason. He's got what it takes."

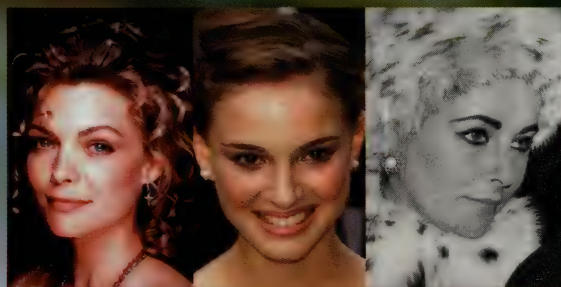
Natasha's favorite collectible

In the jacuzzi scene from *Species*, Henstridge's character Sil kills her lover by sticking her tongue through the back of his head. This amorous maneuver proved so impressive that MTV honored her for Best Kiss of the Year. The tongue-piece was later cast in solid silver and presented to Natasha on a necklace by *Species* director H.R. Geiger. Though her main area of collecting has been coffee mugs, the tongue has shot to the top of her list. A unique artifact, to say the least.

Black dress by Emanuel Ungaro, Paris. Diamond bracelet and ring on right hand by Asprey & Garrard of London.



Nude long dress by Herve Leger, Paris Gold and diamond cross by Asprey & Garrard of London



**Natasha picks her
favorite Glamour Girls**

Michelle Pfeiffer

"She's incredibly glamorous.
Her personality comes through."

Natalie Portman

"As a young woman in the '90s, she's got
the smarts, the talent and the poise. She
sets an incredible example."

Elizabeth Taylor

"She's still got a lot of charm. She's still
very natural, very beautiful."

Even with her consummate success and considerable Hollywood wattage, Natasha Henstridge still has some homespun career goals. Like any of us, in any job, she wants to work with the greats. She pauses to think for a moment.

"I'd like to work with Meryl Streep, Scorsese...I think it'd be a real challenge. I'd probably be shaking like a leaf before I got onto the set."

Hollywood has proven an avalanche of new sensations, but Henstridge's life took its biggest turn of all late last year with the birth of her son, Tristan.

"It's not a question of what has changed, but more what hasn't changed. I want to be proud to do

movies that my son can see in 10 or 20 years and say: 'my mom was an actor, and she was good.'"

With the upcoming release of her new movie, *The Whole Nine Yards*, with Bruce Willis, Henstridge makes a big stride back into the magic circle of Hollywood glamour. Her Web site at www.celebrityboulevard.com launches shortly. It will contain up-to-date facts and figures about Henstridge, as well as live-chats and mini-auctions. She has even mentioned selling various pieces of movie memorabilia online, maybe even her own hand-made pots.

When she's not throwing pots or looking after her son, Henstridge manages to find time to indulge

herself in the world of collecting. "I collect mugs and I collect t-shirts. It's like a mindless collection. I just get them from all the different places or movies I'm on, and sometimes they're the only reminder of what I have done. Like I go get a cup of coffee in the morning, and it reminds me of a day or a time."

In the '40s and '50s the Glamour Girl was defined as an easily moldable young woman, eager to climb the social ladder. Natasha Henstridge is a Glamour Girl for the millennium. She's smart, stylish, and very much her own woman. Toy with her at your own peril.

Better yet, just get the autograph and recede respectfully into her shadow. ☐

Priceless beauty... (and a short list of price tags)

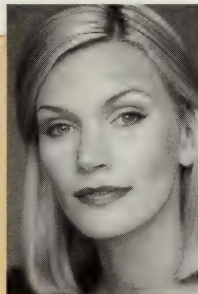
Natasha Henstridge

- Signed 8x10 color photos – \$25-\$50 with COA; careful, there are "pre-prints" out there.
- Species* movie poster – \$10-\$15 depending on condition.
- Species* coasters – \$5-\$7 per set.
- Magazines featuring Natasha on the cover – \$7-\$15.
- Window clings – \$2-\$7 ea.

Greta Garbo

The Swedish siren found fame in the '20s and '30s with films such as *The Temptress*, *Mata Hari*, and *Queen Christina*. *Anna Karenina* is considered by many her definitive performance. In 1954 she was awarded an honorary Academy Award for past performances. She died of natural causes in New York in 1990.

- Postcards in mint condition – \$7-\$10 each.
- Early autographed 8 x 10 – \$585.
- Photoplay* August 1930 – \$26.
- Cigarette cards – \$2-\$10.



Henstridge



Garbo



Bacall



Kelly

Lauren Bacall

This classy actress debuted in 1944's classic *To Have and Have Not*. She co-starred with husband Humphrey Bogart in *The Big Sleep*, *Dark Passage*, and *Key Largo*. She later married actor Jason Robards and is the mother of actor Sam Robards. Her performance in *The Mirror Has Two Faces* (1996) earned her a Golden Globe.

- Signed 8 x 10 – \$25-\$40.
- Key Largo* lobby card – \$153.
- June 30, 1953 *Look* magazine (with Marilyn Monroe, Betty Grable, and Bacall) – \$20.
- Signed poster of *Designing Woman* – \$37.

Grace Kelly

Three-time Golden Globe winner Kelly typified elegance in films such as *Dial M for Murder*, *The Bridges at Toko-Ri*, and *To Catch a Thief* before marrying Prince Rainier and moving to Monaco. Kelly died in a car accident in 1982. Kelly's movies are banned in Monaco by order of the Prince.

- Signed photos – \$250 and up.
- Taittinger champagne poster – \$110.
- Whitman paper dolls – \$38-\$60
- Paris Match* April 26, 1956 (with wedding photos) – \$104.

sweepstakes



The TV system of the future

The **Grand Prize** Winner will enter the next century with ReplayTV's revolutionary set-top box, which combines the latest in digital technology with an intelligent programming service. With ReplayTV and the free Replay Network Service, you'll never miss your favorite TV shows again. You'll create on-demand Replay Channels featuring programs that match your interests. Imagine...your own Tom Hanks, *ER* or golf channels. ReplayTV also gives you complete control over live television – you can pause, rewind or do an instant replay of live television shows. This new system for your television retails for \$899. ReplayTV – Primetime. Anytime. www.replaytv.com.

Twenty-five lucky **second-prize** winners will get to meet the alternapop band *Smithereens*, and will get two tickets to the concert location nearest them in the band's upcoming tour of over 35 locations around the country. Concert package winners also will get two autographed tour t-shirts, a glossy 8 X 10 photo of the band autographed by all the band members, and an autographed copy of the band's newest CD to be released in October, *God Save the Smithereens*. Lead singer Pat DiNizio says the band will treat winners "like royalty."

Third-prize winners will get autographed photos of Natasha Henstridge, sexy star of the 1995 sci-fi thriller *Species* and cover subject of the premiere issue of eBay Magazine.

Rules: No purchase necessary; see rules below. Winners will be chosen at random from among all eligible entries. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of entries received. Only one entry per household. All entries must be received by Nov. 1, 1999. Contest open to U.S. residents only. Must be at least 18 years of age to enter.

Mail entries to:
eBay Magazine Premiere Sweepstakes
700 East State St.
Iola, WI 54990-0001

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
E-mail address _____ Phone _____
Date of birth _____ Last three albums purchased* _____

*optional information

eBay Premiere Issue Sweepstakes 1. To enter without purchase, print your name, address, date of birth, phone number and e-mail address on a 3"x 5" card and send it to: eBay Premiere Issue Sweepstakes, 700 East State Street, Iola, WI, 54990-0001. 2. You must be at least 18 years of age to enter. 3. Potential winners will be required to sign an affidavit of eligibility and a liability/publicity release which must be returned and received by Krause Publications within 21 days of the mailed date to potential winners. 4. One entry per household. No responsibility is assumed for lost, stolen, late, misdirected, mutilated, or illegible entries. 5. Krause Publications, Inc. reserves the right to substitute prizes only in the event of the unavailability of the prize actually won by the contestant. 6. Taxes are the responsibility of the winners. 7. The total retail value of prizes is less than \$5,000. 8. Odds of winning are dependent upon the total number of entries received. 9. Winners will be selected in a random drawing by *EBAY MAGAZINE*, whose decision is final, from entries received by November 1, 1999. Winners will be notified by November 30, 1999. 10. *EBAY PREMIERE ISSUE SWEEPSTAKES* is open to residents of the United States only. Void where prohibited by law and regulation. Not open to employees or families of employees of Krause Publications, Inc., eBay, their affiliates, or their advertising and production agencies. All federal, state and local laws and regulations apply. 11. Krause Publications and eBay are not responsible for any loss or damage incurred by any person due to any matter connected with this contest. 12. For the names of winners, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope after November 30, 1999 to: *eBay Magazine Premiere Issue Sweepstakes*, 700 E. State Street, Iola, WI 54990-0001.



(Monitor not included.)



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**Sales of
software for
the diaper set
are growing
by leaps and
bounds.**

From a **crawl** to a **click**

When it comes to learning, can a computer coddle a toddler?

by Bethanne Kelly Patrick

Emma Paquette, age 2, was becoming increasingly whiny and fretful whenever family members sat down in front of the computer monitor. Her older sister Madelyn, 5, was already playing simple games on the PC, and the girls' mother, Mary Paquette of Arlington, Va., was spending several hours a day working at the keyboard.

At first Mary thought Emma's behavior indicated resentment at mom's limited attention during computer hours. She soon realized, however, that the toddler's lunges for the mouse and keyboard indicated an interest in the machine itself.

"Of course she'd want to try it out," Mary said. "Everyone else in

the family uses the computer, so Emma decided it must be really interesting and important." Mary immediately bought a copy of Knowledge Adventure's JumpStart Baby, a program that uses animation, cheery music, and random-mouse clicks to engage babies from ages six months to two years.

"Emma loves it," said her mom. "The 'TV bear' is the only thing that she likes better than her alphabet blocks."

Wooden blocks have long been popular because they help even the smallest tots connect play and movement with educational basics like letters and numbers. Several new software packages update this early learning concept for use on home computers. The same parents who once snapped up flash cards for their baby now crowd store aisles in search of the latest early learning software. Other parents buy the software because they are entranced by the idea of bringing their children's favorite characters—Elmo,

Madeline, the Teletubbies—to the hearthside monitor.

No matter how interesting and educational a program may be, however, there are issues even more fundamental at stake. Should children as young as six months be spending time at a computer? What health risks are involved? Can babies' minds benefit from watching animation on a screen?

"The computer is everywhere in life, in society," said James Chan, assistant professor of computer education at Indiana University, South Bend. "The earlier we can help a child to be comfortable with technology ... the better prepared [the child] will be for education and a career."

Chan has a simple readiness test: put your child's hand on the mouse and cover it with yours while performing a task on the screen. If your child recognizes that the movement caused the action, she's all set to point and click. Chan believes age two or

EYE

Worth-It Web sites

www.smartfun.com

Educational and entertaining software for all ages.

www.mamamedia.com

Fun games online for young children, founded and maintained by a mom, natch!

www.superkids.com

This software review is comprehensive and educationally oriented.

www.zdnet.com/familypc

Online version of the magazine offers software reviews and more.

www.readerrabbit.com

The software manufacturer offers a bright, fun, site (The Learning Company) that previews a new baby program, "Reader Rabbit's Toddler Adventure."

www.mm-soft.com

Tons of great shareware/public domain software for kids. The pre-school section has offerings like Color Organ, where any click baby makes produces sound and color.

www.kidsclick.com

With over 500 software titles for ages nine months to high school, this San Antonio-based internet business will be a favorite with parents all over the country.

www.funschool.com

Lots of good links, lots of good information, and lots of support. Links available for pre-school up through the sixth grade.

www.dearparents.com

Updated weekly, this site offers "sound advice on learning and technology" from noted teacher and software developer Donna Stanger. Parents can send in questions.

three is early enough for children to approach the computer.

Some experts say that a child doesn't need to wait even that long.

"There is no minimum age level to computer introduction. Just as books are adapted ... to meet the needs of babies and toddlers, computers and software can be adapted to delight and educate even the very young," said Corinne Rupert, child psychologist and adviser to Knowledge Adventure.

There are a number of programs which target the very youngest of budding computer users. For instance, a cuddly teddy bear guides babies through the world of JumpStart Baby. The teddy talks — clumsily — and shows objects on a mobile. Since most younger babies will not be able to click on a specific object, this arrangement allows parents to choose the areas their child explores. Once a game has been selected, any mouse click or key press brings action.

One particular aspect of this program raised questions: in some scenarios, a blank screen or unfinished game is filled in by random clicks from the child. Once the game or puzzle is complete, the child is congratulated with an audible "Great job!," accompanied by clapping noises. Can such false success be good for very young babies and toddlers?

Actually, authorities say the more success the better—when young children feel that they've accomplished something, they are more likely to try something new.

Through the eyes of a child

In recent years there has been much discussion of "windows of opportunity" that exist during a child's development. Research shows that the more sounds and words a child is exposed to before age three, the more sounds and words that child will retain; some studies show increased word recognition affects

the child's eventual IQ.

Since sales of software for the diaper set more than doubled last year, according to PC Data Inc., it's safe to say that parents are trying new ways to keep these windows propped open.

In *Brain Under Construction* (1997), Dr. Will Staso discusses the importance of the early years in brain development, and the extent to which parents can make a difference in their child's cognitive progress.

"I believe that when toddlers control what they see or make happen, they learn more," said Staso.

Human touch

There is little or no concrete evidence suggesting that there are drawbacks to young children spending time at the computer. Pediatrician Nancy Kim said limited periods in front of a monitor would have no detrimental effects on eyesight or posture, and the American Optometric Academy concurs.

Many experts, of course, voice concern that excessive computer time limits experiences like social and tactile contact, which are essential to early childhood development. Software developers like Tony Fernandes of BowWow House and Peter Doctorow, president of Knowledge Adventure, counter this argument by reminding parents that their programs are meant to be "lapware" — that is, used by a child held by an adult or with adult supervision.

More family time and parental contact due to computer use may also help infant cognition. Dr. James M. Herzog writes on the Children's Television Workshop web site: "Infants achieve learning by achieving a state of alertness. They first become alert through sucking or feeding ... social interaction leads to flourishing cognitive skills."

In other words, a child who sits with and babbles to a parent

while playing at the computer will probably be more comfortable there.

Face-to-Face time

Many child development experts—including Herzog—agree that the most effective cognitive skill development occurs through social interaction. While much of the software available is touted as “lapware” for parents and babies to share, a session at the monitor won’t encourage the state of quiet alertness in which babies learn best. For that, the little tikes need facetime—make that face-to-face time.

“I would never tell a parent not to do something that involves interacting with their child, but parents should realize that interaction is what facilitates learning—not com-

puter programs for babies,” said early childhood expert Chris Wallin, adjunct professor in the Graduate School of Education and Human Development at George Washington University.

Taken a bit at a time, Wallin said, computer use is not harmful, but very young children may not actually be learning anything—and that’s fine as long as parents don’t believe they’re teaching their baby the Theory of Relativity.

“If you do use computer programs with your baby,” Wallin said, “use them as you would any kind of storybook. Point out interesting pictures, play peek-a-boo with the screen, and look at your baby as often as possible to gauge reactions and to show her you’re

excited about her discoveries.”

Claire Lerner, a researcher and clinician for Zero to Three (a D.C.-based child-development organization) agreed: “I see the computer as another toy. And I don’t mean toy in a pejorative way.”

So what exactly is the best way to encourage Baby’s genius within?

“Turn any kind of daily activity into a learning experience,” said Wallin. “Describe fruits and vegetables while you’re grocery shopping, spend some time looking at and touching a patch of grass—help your child to explore his environment.”

While the Internet and software may be here to stay, interacting and sharing with your baby will always be time spent in a state of grace and perfection. ☐

10 reasons

Software options for the diaper set

Baby Einstein/Baby Mozart \$34.95 each

Based on fascinating recent research relating to “windows of opportunity” for music and science knowledge, these are natural choices for parents who can’t get baby started early enough.

BabyWow! \$34.99

“Computers are increasingly part of the family, and kids want to play with them,” states BowWow House, so it offers this interactive, vocabulary-rich (with eight language options), virtual photo album to get them started.

Fisher Price Ready for School/Toddler \$19.95

The recognizable Fisher Price Little People, along with the familiar games and familiar “look” make this a surefire favorite with toddlers—babies may be bored and older children will certainly need the next level.

JumpStart Baby/JumpStart Toddler \$19.95 each.

Popular, affordable, and easy-to-use programs. JS Baby’s teddy is guaranteed to elicit squeals of glee from your baby!

Mike Mulligan and His Steam Shovel \$19.95

True to Virginia Bell Cannon’s timeless tale, this software-book is short, sweet, and excellent for very young children.

Reader Rabbit’s Toddler Adventure \$19.95

Parents have been heard gushing about this readily avail-

able program, which features irresistible music and lots of activities. A great feature—instead of trying to click, your child can simply shake the mouse to get things going.

Sesame Street Elmo’s Preschool \$39.95

Over 50 skills, including those about safety, nutrition, recycling, and health, are presented by that iconic red and furry toddler, Elmo, and his gang of friends.

Stellaluna – Living Storybooks \$44.80

Our highest-priced pick, with good reason—this dreamy, rich re-creation of Janell Cannon’s story of a young fruit bat’s separation from her mother offers a wide range of activities—simple storytelling for babies on to science quizzes for preschoolers.

Tonka Garage/Tonka Construction \$24.85 each.

These two programs are definitely fun rather than educational...or are they? Children of all ages will come back again and again for screen-based building, moving, and construction, making these titles ideal for making the computer a friendly place.

Winnie the Pooh Animated Storybook \$35.95

This was one of the first animated storybook series, and it’s still among the best. With several titles to choose from now, the Disney-version Pooh characters will delight babies from nine months on.



The mask's mystique

In the world of online anonymity, reality can take some odd turns

by Deborah Picker

Little Rock, Arkansas — 10 years ago. Late at night, on a quiet suburban street, a light burns brightly inside a modest home. Long after her husband has gone to sleep, 56-year-old Beth Kellman is having a ball.

Nestled in her den, amidst the TV, card table and chaise lounge, Beth stares intently at her computer. Though alone, she is not at a loss for companionship—online, anyway. Her friends here, in one of Compuserve's very first chat rooms, know her as Sparkles.

"Sparkles was like the sexy blonde, just talking [nonsense]," she says now. "She was into double-entendres. I'd just flirt and have some fun."

Now 66, Beth is still active online. While most of the time, she insists, she's been brutally honest about her identity when talking

"There aren't any consequences to your actions, so you can behave as badly as you want."

—Susan Landers, a 39-year-old administrator (or "wizard") on a multi-user dimension game

with people, she's had a variety of names on a number of services in the past. Other pseudonyms included Pythia, after a Greek goddess: "mostly she gave advice, helped people." And Dimples: "she was a nut. She'd kid around, tell jokes, talk to people. Have a good time."

Beth says she ventured into chat rooms out of boredom. "I had been married a long time. This was an exciting new thing. The first guy I started talking to regularly was my daughter's age." But the most intriguing aspect, Beth says, is this: "It was like creating a character. It was like watching a TV

show that you wrote and also starred in."

Beth's experience is not uncommon. Embracing anonymity online — whether blatant role-playing or slight exaggerating in an e-mail — is practically a national phenomenon.

"The Internet is a play space, a practice space, where we project aspects of ourselves," says Dr. Sherry Turkle, a clinical psychologist and professor at MIT. Turkel has been nicknamed "the Margaret Mead of cyberspace," a title earned after a decade of research on computers and identity. "Seeing *your* words attached to someone else's name is so emotionally powerful," she adds.

It must be. A massive amount of traffic passes through chat rooms nightly (exactly 12,076 last I dipped into Yahoo's Hot Tub — for research purposes only, of course) and they can't possibly all be coming for the chat alone. The conver-

"Anonymity... is a convenient shield for character assassins."



— Howard Rheingold,
author of the classic book,
The Virtual Community

sation typically runs on par with, say, a high school note being passed around on a napkin: "That's cool." "What about you?" "Me too." "Ha, Ha, Ha."

Clearly, much of the thrill comes from the anonymity — the charge of re-creating our identity and sending a fantasy self out into cyberspace, to mix with other equally opaque figures from all walks of life, and all corners of the country. And that has as many ramifications as there are user-names.

Richard Seltzer, author of *The Way of the Web* and a self-described "Internet Evangelist," believes that anonymity on the Net—even taking on entire false identities—is a healthy thing that can be playful and bring you closer to yourself. "People take on personas for a variety of reasons," he says. "Some do so because they don't want people to know who they are; others because they want to find out who they could be."

Nowhere is this type of identity play more extreme than on multi-user dimension games. MUDs are text-based, interactive role-playing games that came out of Dungeons and Dragons. Players know one another only by the elaborate characters they create for themselves—the trend is to choose names from literature or recent science fiction—and they compete with either the computer or each other, killing monsters, solving puzzles, or just chatting in virtual spaces.

"It's like IRC (Internet relay chat) with scenery," says Susan Landers, a 39-year-old administra-

tor (or "wizard") on a MUD that has 5,000 regular users, 200 on at any one time.

Susan feels that anonymity online—even when it's in good fun—is dangerous. "There aren't any consequences to your actions, so you can behave as badly as you want." Further, dialogue on MUDs is delivered in third person and Susan feels this fosters verbal abuse. "People feel removed. There's a lot of: 'Egor pokes you in the eye with his sword,' or 'Spock anally rapes you.' And they can be pretty graphic about it."

Eight years ago, Susan got trapped in an anonymous mind game. "This one guy had ten characters — some men, some women, some creatures." Susan had no way of knowing they were all the same person. "He'd pick fights with himself and call me in as administrator to mediate. I got so caught up in it, trying to keep these guys apart, it was draining." What could someone possibly get out of a self-inflicted virtual multiple personality disorder? "He tricked me and it worked. He got high on the power trip."

While Sherry Turkle agrees anonymity on MUDs gives some people permission to act out, she argues that for others, it is a fertile ground for personal growth. "It helps a lot of people develop confi-

dence in forming friendships and in their ability to deal with the world." In her book, *Life on the Screen*, she elaborates: "The anonymity of MUDs ... gives people the chance to express multiple and often unexplored aspects of the self, to play with their identity and to try out new ones."

Howard Rheingold, author of the classic, *The Virtual Community*, points out that anonymity online is heavily dependent upon context. "In MUDs ... where entertainment, fantasy and identity play is understood to be the name of the game, pseudonymity is all part of the fun. But in virtual communities (such as newsgroups or mailing lists), where people seek to know each other on a deeper level, anonymity can be corrosive of trust. And it's a convenient shield for character assassins."

Kelly Roussoff, a sysop on Compuserve back in the early '80s, became romantically involved with one such "assassin." She says her online chat group was such an integral part of her life, she'd often stay on for 24 hours a pop. "It consumed me — I wasn't living. I'd sleep online. They'd call me at home and say 'wake up and sign off.'"

It was during one of these cyberstretches that she met Commander Mitch. "He said he was a Navy pilot, a Top Gun. It was during the Gulf War and he said he was overseas and involved in all this top secret stuff — that if he had to disconnect real quick, I should understand." Their relationship flourished online for several months, and after phoning and exchanging

"People take on personas partly because

pictures, they finally met in Florida. "It went on for years. He'd come and stay with me for a few weeks, then take off on some mission." One day, the commander left for good. "He said no matter what happens, it's you I love. And that's the last I saw of him. I found out later he was married and had never been in the Navy. He was a TV repairman in Pensacola."

As the founder and CEO of Delphi, one of the first-ever online services, Wes Krussmaul has also seen his share of people masking their identities to manipulate others. "We had this priest on Delphi and he offered himself as a couples counselor on our bulletin boards and involved himself in peoples' relationships," he says. "But he had a pattern of fostering resentments and made a sport out of breaking up peoples' marriages."

Enough people complained that Delphi administrators eventually broke their code of confidentiality and looked up his credentials. It turned out he wasn't a priest at all. None of the churches he mentioned had ever heard of him.

These last two stories represent an extreme and are not meant to suggest that all virtual communities are teeming with masked emotional predators. There are ambiguities and in-betweens. Krussmaul believes anonymity online is much like going to a masquerade party in Times Square. "Most people are there just to have fun; but what a great opportunity for a pickpocket."

If the Net is really an "electronic

"The Internet is a play space, a practice space, where



we project aspects of ourselves."

— Dr. Sherry Turkle, a clinical psychologist

and professor at MIT.

watering hole," to borrow Seltzer's phrase, then Dusty, 20, was there mainly for a quick drink. Under the alias "Oakianus," he met his (now ex) girlfriend ("Sapphire" online) at the-park.com. Flirting was easy: while Dusty gets tongue tied during the initial banter, Oakianus is far from shy.

"And if I embarrass myself, she'll never see my face," he adds. Though Dusty was living with a woman at the time, he and Sapphire chatted nightly in a virtual space they agreed was a bar. Their conversations became intimate at times, but Dusty never revealed details about his life.

"Once in a while I'd let slip the general idea of where I lived; but she never knew what school I went to. The less they know about me the more I like it." Eventually the two began phoning and exchanged real names. "We were already comfortable with each other. It was like talking to an old friend years after they moved away. We were just catching up on each others' lives." Inevitably, Dusty hopped a bus to San Diego to meet Sapphire. "Sparks flew," he says, and shortly after, she moved in with him.

Lev Grossman, a 30-year-old novelist in New York who is active on The Well, can relate. "There's something about talking to some-

one who's face you can't see and who's not part of your daily life," he says, "that frees people to be more open." The Well, a tangle of interest specific bulletin boards that subscribers pay to belong to, is known to host more substantive conversation and users post messages on topics ranging from books or movies to sexual advice.

Though identity on The Well is thinly disguised at best—not everyone uses pseudonyms and user profiles are available—it's still a faceless, intangible community, where the interaction isn't live; and this subtle degree of anonymity, Grossman says, brings people together. In what he describes as an "anonymous cyber-void," Grossman has solicited professional advice from famous authors like Bruce Sterling that he'd never normally have access to. "Everyone feels equal on The Well," he says. "It feels very democratic there."

When Rene Harding, a 40-year-old English as a Second Language teacher abroad, initially joined The Well, she was spending so much time there that friends warned her she'd turn away from real life; but Rene found the opposite — the open, faceless nature of the community made her more accepting of people in real life. "You listen to people you normally wouldn't because in real life ... they're fat or don't dress well or they're older. But in print, it turns out they're witty and have interesting things to say. I used to have more prejudices about how people looked; but The Well has broadened my horizons. Now when I meet anyone ... I give

they want to find out who they could be."

— Richard Seltzer, author of *The Way of the Web* and a self-described "Internet Evangelist."

them more of a chance.”

Rene feels the nature of written communication online, where there's more time to craft thoughts, lends itself to our presenting ideal, fantasy versions of ourselves — even if subliminally. Her nine-month online relationship with Chris, in which they seemed destined for one another, ended abruptly after they met in person.

“He seemed tolerant and sweet. But he was concealing certain tyrannical tendencies.” Further, Rene explains, sex offline wasn't as “wired.” “E-mail can be incredibly hot because you're not inhibited by your normal persona. We'd exchange these elaborate fantasies.” But in person, the physicality was all wrong. “We assumed we'd hit it off — he thought I'd be the mother of his kids — but we

“You listen to people you normally wouldn't because in real life ... they're fat or don't dress well or they're older. But in print, it turns out they're witty and have interesting things to say.”

—Rene Harding, a 40-year-old teacher and member of The Well, a tangle of interest specific bulletin boards.

didn't. He couldn't deal with the reality of me.”

The transformation between the public and private self is an age-old theme reflected in literature dating back to Shakespeare's comedies, and as contemporary as the classic

movie character Walter Mitty or Nora Ephron's *You've Got Mail*.

There are countless degrees of — and avenues for — anonymity on the Net. But whether it's the loud, public storm of live conversation in chat rooms, more substantive virtual communities like The Well, or elaborate role-playing forums such as MUDs, the common thread is individuals seeking connections where, amidst the fluidity of cyberspace, we can both escape and embrace our identities.

“We are moving toward a culture of simulation in which people are increasingly comfortable with substituting representations of reality for the real,” Sherry Turkle writes. She is careful not to qualify this as either bad or good, pointing out: “If it works for you, it has all the reality it needs.”



netgame

Navigating anonymity on the Net

Protecting yourself from potential dangers:

1. Never give out your on-line password to anyone—even if they say they work for your Internet Service Provider. As a rule, on-line staff members will never ask for your personal password.
2. Never continue a conversation that becomes more personal than you're comfortable with, or seems in any other way inappropriate. Like a telephone, you can hang up.
3. If you're concerned about your children, choose an on-line service that gives you good parental control. Their Parent Control Center will help you set up the system so your kids can use it as a resource, not interactively, by blocking: chat rooms, bulletin board services, instant messages, newsgroups.
4. If you plan to meet someone you've been corresponding with online, do it in stages, using layers of security: give out your work e-mail address first; make phone contact from work if you can talk there, and don't give out your home number or address. Don't reveal your real name until you are absolutely comfortable and have verified information about the person. If you decide to meet in person, do it during the day, in a public place.
5. Never lend money to someone online — no matter what their circumstances.
6. The numerous role playing games online — MUDs, MUCKs and MOOs — are free to join. Reach into the deep recesses of your imagination, choose a name ... and have fun. It's a great way to exercise hidden sides of yourself — and it's a cheap escape.
7. Most virtual communities are interest specific. Seek out a category and here, where no one knows your name, you can ask questions you might be embarrassed to bring up to friends or co-workers. You'll receive a cross-section of opinions.
8. Heighten your anonymity: when surfing the Web, set your browser's preferences so that it won't accept cookies. Cookies are small bits of information that can allow Web masters to read your identity off your computer.
9. The “faceless” nature of the web makes it possible to meet people you might never have access to in “real” life (authors, actors, established colleagues in your field, etc); This can be an invaluable networking tool.
10. Learn more about anonymity and how to further protect your privacy by checking out The Anonymizer (www.anonymizer.com).

— eBay Magazine editors

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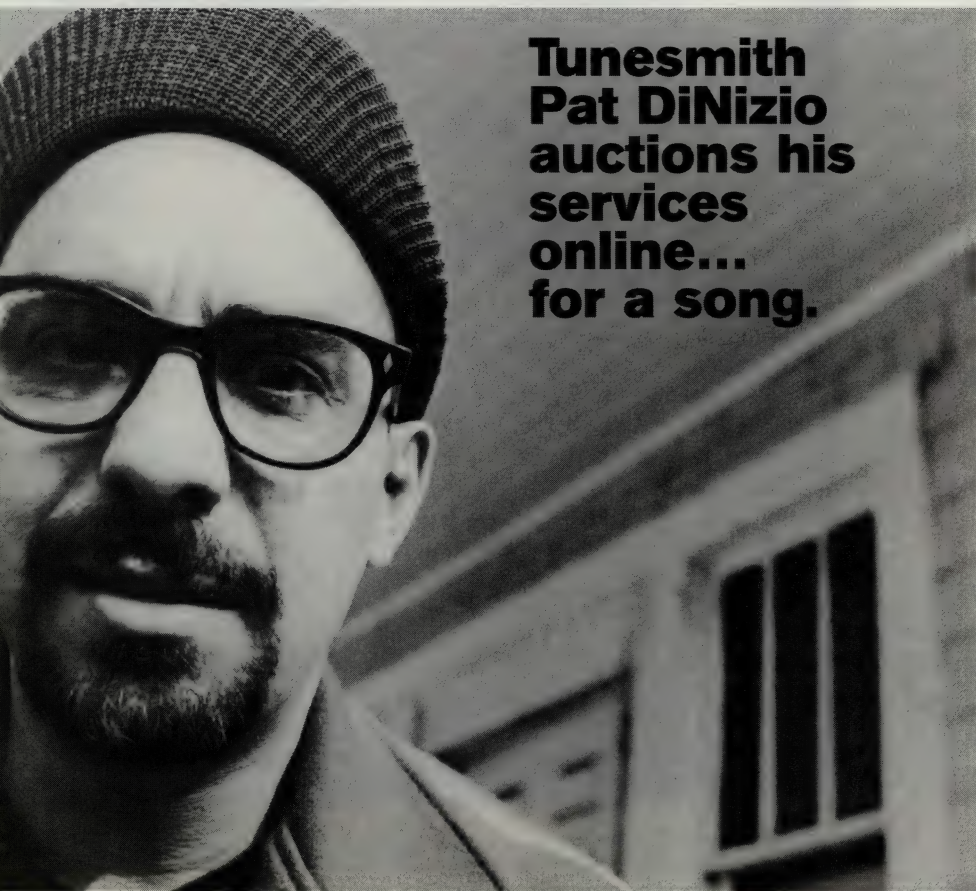
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Music à la modem



**Tunesmith
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for a song.**

DiNizio. The first of these, “Psycholaborations,” is for those with no musical aspirations. Fill out a short application, send in your poem or a name, and choose the style — from hip hop to indie rock. Pat then writes you a song of your very own.

“Psycholaborations 2” allows a beginning musician or blocked songwriter to collaborate with DiNizio. Send in snatches of melody or half-written lines and Pat will work his magic. Wait four to six weeks (because “quality takes time”) and your song will be delivered to you in your choice of formats — MP3 to cassette. Later the songs will be compiled on an album to be called “Strangers on a Refrain.”

That title should give you an idea of how this project will run. Serious or silly, DiNizio seems to be up for it.

DiNizio’s inspiration sprang from the ads in the back of old comic books that promised collaboration with a professional songwriter. All the buyer had to do was send in a poem or idea, or the name of his or her beloved.

“There’s a series of bootleg CDs floating around that have these songs that people ‘collaborated’ on in the ’60s and ’70s. Some of them really are art. Others are about rollerdisco, or Richard Nixon,” DiNizio laughs.

What kind of response has been

Wouldn’t it be great if you could write a song with your favorite recording artist? Pat DiNizio thought so.

The Smithereens’ lead singer, who has achieved notability with alternapop classics such as “Blood and Roses,” “A Girl Like You” and “Behind the Wall of Sleep,” recently offered his songwriting services on eBay. The auction, won for \$330, was intended as a teaser for DiNizio’s website, www.psycholaborations.com, but may have created a new e-commerce/charity category for talented artisans.

When you log onto www.psycholaborations.com you’ll find a neat, atmospheric site — and two different opportunities to “work” with

generated at DiNizio's site? "I've been getting lots of e-mail queries from all over the world. People are interested."

There's a clause about subject matter and wordage about what you can do with your song once you get it, but other than that you are allowed to exercise your artistic vision. You can re-interpret, re-record, and play your song to your heart's content. You cannot, however, decide to shop the actual "DiNizio version" to the labels.

That's not to say you can't record your own version of the song and shop that to the labels. You share 50/50 songwriting credit with DiNizio as long as you have contributed something. Psycholaborations is a high-class twist on a childhood memory that appeals to musician and listener alike.

DiNizio is also branching out into other areas of the Web — most notably Liquid Audio, where his future solo work will be released. DiNizio is a believer in using the Web as a tool to reach potential buyers. "There's a segment of the populace in their 30s and 40s that doesn't necessarily want to buy music in a store with loud music blaring at them. They want to buy music on their own terms. Marketing on the Web is less expensive — as well as going directly to the fans."

Psycholaborations promises to serve musicians as well. Plans for guest lecturers and real time music classes as well as a chatroom are in the works. DiNizio also plans to stream audio through the site featuring unsigned and indie bands.

So how's the eBay-initiated song going? DiNizio has had contact with




DiNizio will turn a snatch of melody or a few half-written lines into a song.

the auction winner and is working on two versions of the song. The first is based on the winner's lyrics, the second is a re-arrangement of a song the winner has written. Talk about bang for your buck! Actually, it was DiNizio's idea to do the two versions. Where else can

you get that kind of customer service?

In addition to his songsmithing skills, DiNizio invests time on eBay auctioning off more mundane items — books, posters, movies, etc. A collector of all things pop culture since age 8, he's recently started putting items up for bid. It's been a rewarding experience so far.

"Bidding on eBay is akin to the thrill of gambling or winning a contest. I return e-mails immediately and send stuff out right away. It creates good will."

Don't be surprised if you bump into DiNizio on eBay while you're looking for that obscure '60s movie poster or other piece of pop ephemera. Chances are he has it. And if you have a song in your heart, DiNizio suggests you consider seeing a professional. Songwriter, that is. 

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Capture the essence of America's hideaways, without leaving your niche. This month: Door County, Wis.



The "Cape Cod of the Midwest" attracts more than 2.1 million visitors per year. Drawn to the peninsula's 250 miles of Lake Michigan shoreline, tourists remain enthralled by the bustle of its quaint villages as well as five state parks and 85 galleries, museums and performing arts organizations. Door County is accented by more than 4,000 acres of orchards and a smattering of island paradises; wildflowers waltz in whispering winds, set off by the brilliant green of patchwork fields. From sailing on Sturgeon Bay to roughing it on Rock Island, the area makes for the perfect getaway — even for those who can't get away.

With a little help from the Internet, traveling to such distant places and bringing back the best they have to offer becomes as gentle as a Door County breeze. Serving up the unique flavors of this secluded hideaway — where homemade is the most common of words and cherries reign supreme — will make even the most seasoned of travelers forget they missed the vacation.



Picking the cherries...



The result: Berry Best Foods.



The artists: Waterwhirl fountains.

Photos by Mike Brisson

Inspired to take a real Door County vacation? Start planning next

Fish smoked perfect

Smoked fish is a Door County specialty that is hard to come by, but Charlie Voight makes it easy. Rather than traveling 85 miles up the peninsula from Green Bay, Wis., to Gills Rock, dial up www.charliessmokehouse.com and Charlie will deliver everything to your door. Smoking fish has been a tradition in his family since 1932, the year his father began selling smoked chubs to summer visitors. Since that time, locally caught



whitefish, as well as Canadian lake trout and Pacific salmon, have been added to the

menu. Each fish is salted overnight, then slow-cooked over a wood-burning fire. With the help of his sons, Charlie continues to satisfy visitors with a product perfected by his father. The biggest difference today is that any visitor to the Internet can partake of the family trade. Before ordering online, be sure to check the calendar; Charlie's Smokehouse only ships its perishable product from October to April.

charliessmokehouse.com

Fountains that dance

Masterpieces by local artists personalize any world traveler's trip; this Door County specialty sprinkles a bit of local talent right onto the garden-lover's lawn. Waterwhirl fountains are hand-

crafted by members of the Door County Arts Guild, located in Egg Harbor. Each is a unique piece of art, and likewise will create an individualized pattern of dancing drops as it waters a small lawn or garden. The pieces can be made of copper or nickel to coordinate with any garden scheme; order over the Internet at www.doorcountystore.com.



doorcountystore.com



Everything Cherry

Door County is most famous for its cherries. Berry Best Foods Unlimited, based in Ellison Bay, has it all. Run by the

Teskies, who stock their fruitful business from the family-run orchards, the company's most popular products include cherry salsa, chocolate cherry spread, cherry almond jelly, cherry butter, jam and marmalade. Of course there's the traditional cherry pie — each one from Berry Best Foods is filled with at least two pounds of Door County cherries. They sell in the thousands each year, with inquiries from as far away as Japan. Here's another one of those personal, Door County touches: order from Berry Best Foods and they will send a Door County recipe to go along with the purchase — just ask. For a catalog of their prod-

ucts, e-mail berrybestfoods@mail.doorcounty-wi.com, or order Berry Best Foods products at

doorcountystore.com/berrybest/default.htm

Unique collectibles

If fruits, fish and fountains aren't what you're looking for, there's one more online store that brings the best of Door County to the nation. Door County Collectibles, located in Fish Creek, carries products

specific to the area, from cookbooks by local chefs to the figurines of Sister Bay artist David Frykman (manufactured by Minneapolis-based company Coyne & Co.). It can all be ordered online

at doorcountycollectibles.com. Door County candles, home-style preserves, and coffees and teas are just a few more great ways this Web site helps the stationary traveler capture the spirit of Door County. ☐

doorcountycollectibles.com

If your community has a strong Web presence and unique product to share with the world, don't keep it a secret. Let us know and we'll consider putting your local flavor in a future issue of *eBay Magazine*. E-mail ebaytravel@krause.com

Monika Sawyer and Daisy Cain; additional reporting by Carol Lyons, editor, *Door County Magazine*.



The main dish: smoked fish.



The real thing: Sister Bay.



Sailing along the shore.

summer's getaway now by visiting doorcountyvacations.com.

KISS & Tell

Roar of the grease paint still fuels '70s icons

by Kris Manty

When KISS first elucidated their hankering to rock and roll all night and party every day, band members couldn't have guessed the bender might last more than 20 years. A matter of KISSmet? Maybe. But also chalk it up to a brilliant marketing strategy that has helped the band enthrall millions of fans, while banking millions of dollars in merchandising.

In the late '70s, KISS was the most popular band in the world, according to Gallup polls. Band members were even super heroes of their own comic book—the red ink used for the illustrations supposedly contained a small drop of blood from each of them, a sly marketing scheme not many fans could resist. Whether dolls or notebooks, boxers or books, KISS had its name or image emblazoned on it.

How to explain the mystique of a band that's still the life of the rock and roll party when it just as easily could have ended up a one head-bang wonder? Besides the tunes, Peter Criss, Ace Frehley, Gene Simmons and Paul Stanley have always offered their fans a full range of comic-book theatrics—from elaborate makeup, costumes and sky-high platform boots, to blood spitting, flame-belching pyrotechnics.

"KISS has managed to pull off a



feat unprecedented in music history—riding the roller coaster of popularity to its peak in three separate decades," said Tom Shannon, author of *Goldmine's Price Guide to KISS Collectibles*, due on shelves in February 2000. "They were the undisputed kings of rock & roll for 1977-78. Their popularity waned, lineup changed, and makeup was removed in the '80s, yet they were again selling at multi-platinum level by 1987-88."

While that 10-year span between major successes is astounding, the fact that the original lineup reformed and attained the position of the top-grossing concert act for 1996, based on six months of touring, is unprecedented.

He said when it became clear that KISS unmasked had gone as far as it could, the band recalled Frehley and Criss to re-form the original lineup, complete with makeup. Neither the band nor its



Left to right, this page: 'Creatures of the Night' cover (make-up), \$14-30; Colorforms, \$125-150; 'Creatures of the Night' cover (no make-up), \$7-15; Psycho Circus tourbook, \$25; Original pressing 'Kiss' cover, \$50-75; 'Dynasty' insert poster, \$7-15; 'Destroyer' cover, \$15-50.

"There is nothing to top a guy flying through the air, spitting blood all over the place."

—David Snowden of David Snowden Promotions, Internet seller of official KISS merchandise.

most ardent supporters predicted the level of success it would meet on the road during the reunion tour in 1996.

David Snowden of David Snowden Promotions, a secured Internet seller of official KISS merchandise (www.kissshop.com), said he believes the band is still going strong because of its family-like bond with fans.

"People grew up with the band. In the beginning they were special, giving fans something that was not available anywhere else. There is nothing to top a guy flying through the air, spitting blood all over the place. In the '80s, without their makeup, they became like any other band, but the fans still kept the emotional attachment," said Snowden.


As for merchandise, it's almost a question of what the band *won't* market; rugs, mouse pads, KISSmas balls, T-shirts—name it. There are Space Ace key chains (\$8), photo mugs (\$9.99), CD clocks (\$15), and a limited-edition pewter figurine (\$575).

And if you missed the original KISS mayhem the first time around, or had ringside seats and want to relive the glory days, a new movie this month recaptures some of that magic. New Line Cinema's *Detroit Rock City*, set in

The KISS marketing machine

has cranked out thousands of collectibles since the 1970s. Here's some of the memorabilia featured in *Goldmine's Price Guide to Kiss Collectibles*:

- Pez dispenser, any member (bootleg): \$11-\$25
- Halloween latex head (any member): \$17-\$40
- Paul Stanley Black Diamond signature model Washburn guitar (limited to 100): \$10,000
- Sponge (KISS Army/Dynasty concert): \$11-\$25
- Chubop Gum: \$7-\$15
- Toothbrush, Rock and Roll Over (bootleg): \$3-\$8
- Golf balls (KISS Army-3 pack): \$4-\$10
- Gene Simmons' pre-Rock and Roll Over guitar pick, sans KISS logo: \$200-\$225
- Ice cream bar wrappers (Australia): \$41-\$100
- Unauthorized Czechoslovakian beer (empty can): \$30 to \$40
- Disco bag (Australia): \$47-\$90
- Wine, etched faces on bottle (alcoholic/non-alcoholic): \$33-\$65
- Custom Bally slot machines, made for each member and their manager in 1977: Priceless

1978, follows the exploits of some teens who try to scam their way into a KISS show. Gene, Paul, Ace and Peter even do a cameo in full regalia, re-creating one of their early concerts. 

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Left to right, this page: 'Destroyer' cover, \$15-50; Paul Stanley stage-smashed Gibson Marauder guitar, \$300-375; Gene Simmons 'blood' towel, \$50-75; ear plugs, \$7-15.

A photograph of a middle-aged man with grey hair and glasses, smiling broadly. He is wearing a maroon button-down shirt. In the background, a computer monitor is visible, displaying a webpage with text and a blue header. The overall lighting is warm and slightly dim.

snipe turnt

Fred Wishnie has been on both sides of the snipe; it is, to him, an inevitable part of online auction life.

Hunting the online sniper

Last-minute bidders have advice for the polite: start sniping before you're gunned down.

by Johanna S. Billings

It's Thursday afternoon and Stu Horn has his finger on the trigger. One tap to his Microsoft Intelli-mouse and a bid of \$757.50 will be placed in an online auction. If all goes as planned, in 15 seconds he will be the new owner of a Victorian glass rose bowl.

Like Horn, many bidders intentionally remain in hiding until seconds before an online auction closes, a strategy known as "sniping." Aptly named for the most cunning of marksmen, these bidders eliminate the enemy from a great distance, they remain unseen, and they get the job done with a single shot.

While sniping in the auction world certainly isn't meant to bring harm to others, it is a very controversial way to bid. Horn blew away the previous bid of \$20.99 with his last-minute snipe, successfully adding the English glass piece to his collection for its reserve price of \$275. He did it right, leaving no time for other bidders to counter his price.

This is the obvious reason to snipe — win an auction by blocking out all other bidders — but people snipe with many other goals in mind, and they don't seem likely to stop any time soon. Like it or not, sniping is an integral part of most online auctions.

Eleventh-hour bids

Many high-profile, experienced collectors spend hours seeking out

prospective bargains, and they use sniping as a way to protect their knowledge from would-be thieves.

"My biggest problem is people looking to see what I bid on to see if they should be bidding on it," says James Lefever, 42, a glass collector from Manheim, Pa. He has been buying and selling in online auctions for two years.

When such buyers bid early, competitors can then discover their finds in a matter of minutes by doing a bidder search.

"I have had people tell me that they don't have the time to spend searching through all the listings so they just look at what several high-profile bidders are bidding on," he says. While Lefever doesn't mind sharing information or answering questions from novice collectors, he simply does not believe his bidder list should serve as a short-cut for others.

Brian Severn, 32, a glass collector from Pleasant Hill, Calif., snipes for basically the same reason.

"I find that people have come to recognize my name, and who I am

in the eBay community niche. If I bid early on items, it tends to raise interest, and I know that certain people follow what other knowledgeable dealers and collectors are interested in," he says.

A common opinion of the sniper is that bids attract bids, and a main object in this game — much to the chagrin of sellers — is to keep other buyers from noticing what should be noticed.

"There's so much stuff up there that people tend to be drawn to things that have a lot of activity," says Fred Wishnie, 62, a glass collector and dealer in Milwaukee. "By leaving your bid till the very end, there's the hope that [the item] will sit there without a lot of bids, at a lower price."

Another reason to snipe is simply the desire for instant gratification.

"I don't have to wonder very long if I got [my piece] and at the end I have a better idea of where the price may be," says Beverlee Resch, 60, of Sunnyvale, Calif., who has been bidding at eBay since the San Jose, Calif.-company's earliest days.

Of course, some do just want to win — no matter what the price.

"By putting in my maximum bid in the last few seconds, I have a better chance of getting the item," says Larry Sidmore, 57, of Punta Gorda, Fla. "When I put my maximum bid in early, someone will keep increasing their bid incrementally until they are one over me."

Pam McCutcheon, 30, of Richmond, Va., has been buying and selling since last Christmas. She says sniping not only helps keep the price down but gives her at least a *chance* to win. Otherwise, she ends up getting outbid.

Others have turned to sniping out of frustration from getting outbid at the last minute themselves. Dennis Anderson, 53, of Houston, Texas, says his third attempt at purchasing something on eBay was his turning point.

"I had the high bid until being out-

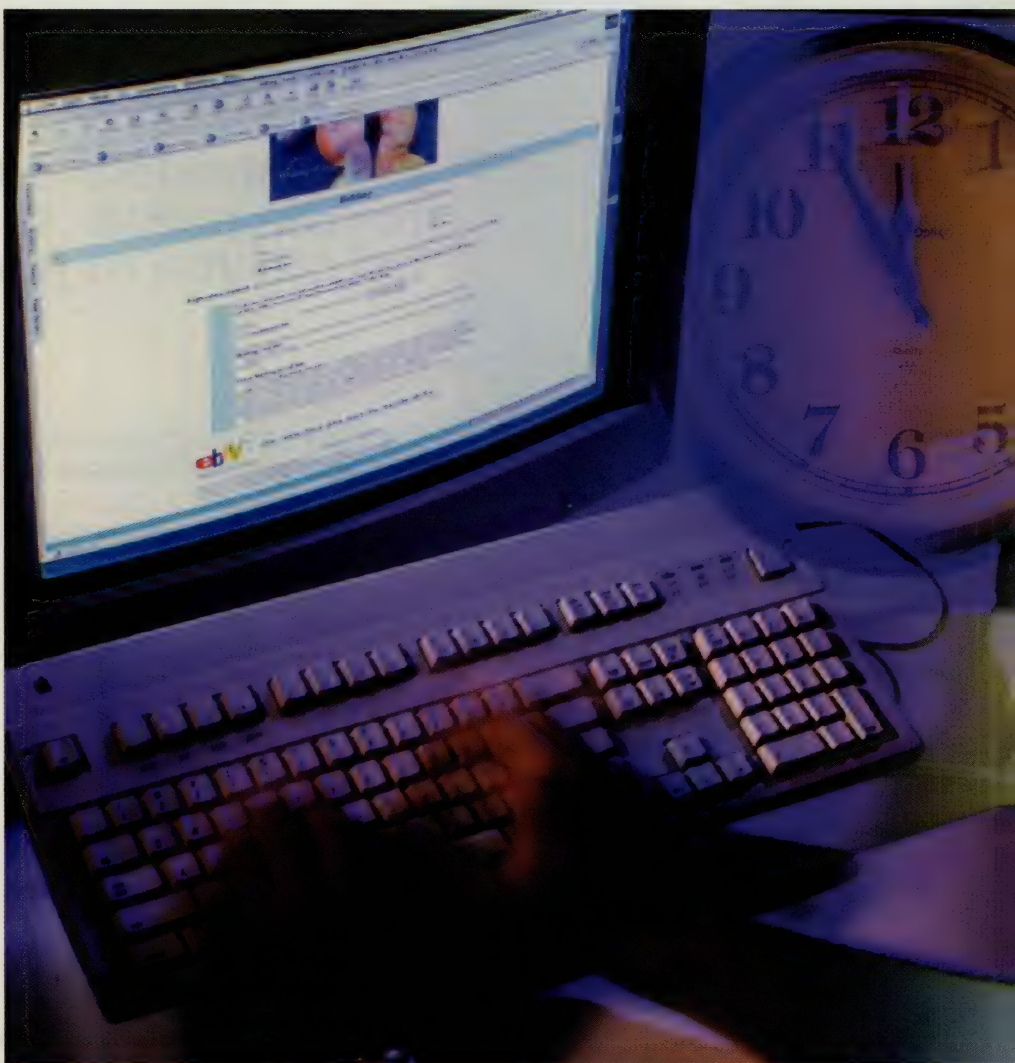
bid by 50 cents the last 23 seconds of the auction. Since that time, I snipe," he says. He's been buying on eBay for over a year. "My object is to win the bid, not get the item at the lowest possible bid."

Those who still resist the urge to

you have to learn to live with it or become a sniper yourself."

How to snipe

Although snipers consider their strategy to be an art form, learning how to do it is really not that difficult.



Burned by snipers themselves, online buyers like Dennis Anderson rely on quick hands to steal valuable finds from others.

sneak in on auctions just moments before they close, or who send nasty e-mail to people who "steal" their stuff, may need to give up on playing fair and start sniping. That's what Alan Badia, 35, of Tampa, Fla., suggests.

"It is sometimes frustrating, but

The first step is to keep track of the items you want to bid on. Some snipers enter a low initial bid so they can easily track the auction through a bidder search.

Others print out the auctions and stack them chronologically beside

"A last-minute sniper is like

their computers. Leif Gellein, 32, of Campbell River, British Columbia, Canada, actually sets his alarm if he really wants something. Still others bookmark auctions they have an interest in and organize them in bookmark folders.

The mechanics vary. The key is to devise a system that works for you.

Once you have your auctions organized, check once a day or so to see which are closing soon. Successful snipers suggest bidding anywhere from 20 minutes to mere seconds before closing. How close you cut it depends on your priorities.

Some say the earlier bid protects you from equipment failure and also from other snipers, because you can enter another bid if your first attempt fails to get you the item. Others prefer the last-minute zap that gives competitors no time to react with their own bid.

If you're a first-time sniper, it's a good idea not to cut it too close. You need to know that the system will have time to enter your bid. Otherwise, you could lose your chance, especially if you didn't enter an earlier bid. If you decide that giving the competition no reaction time is best, you will learn to cut down your time with practice.

Quick hand, watchful eye

Despite all the reasons snipers can give for placing their last-minute bids, not everyone has bought into the need for such cutthroat behavior.

"I tried [to snipe] once on several glass catalogs," says Jeanne Ceyler, 54, of Anna, Ohio. "They were each listed individually and when I would get the high bid on one, and go to the next, I lost the high bid on the first one."

Another reason people avoid the practice is the amount of time and attention it takes. Unless you purchase one of several computer programs available to snipe for you, it takes a quick hand and a watchful eye.

"I have not sniped. I have not found anything I wanted that bad to sit

and wait," says Jean Meyer, 35, of Melbourne, Fla., who has been on eBay only about a month. "If I want something, then I offer what I think is a fair price. If I get beat, oh well, there is always next time. Many times my limit is a lot more than the item sells for so I am pleased."

Sellers on sniping

If snipers bid late in the game in an effort to keep prices down, then the obvious question is, what do sellers think?

Opinions vary. On the one hand, many sellers enjoy watching last minute "bidding frenzies."

"I love to watch the price jump at the last minute," says McCutcheon. "I had some pottery listed that I picked up at a garage sale for one dollar and I watched the price go from \$15.50 to \$47 in two minutes. It was fun! Last minute bidders also tend to bid high, because they know there are no second chances, so I do get a better price."

On the other hand, some sellers believe that waiting to bid reduces interest in an item, and so can lead to lower prices.

"I feel [snipers] cost me revenues," Wishnie says. "It's frustrating to see some of my auctions with no bids on them for days and then have them get bids in the last hour or so. It's not much fun to watch, either. I think bids may generate more bids and I like it when there's action on the auction."

A tip from sellers who rarely suffer at the hands of a sniper: set an appropriate opening bid or use reserves to avoid giving items away for less than their value. That way, a sniper only serves to boost the price even further.

In the words of Gellein, "A last-minute sniper is like the cherry on a sundae."

Snipeless sites

At Just Glass Auctions, bidders can wait until the last minute, but it may not get them anywhere.

Just Glass employs what it calls the Auction Extension; if a bid comes in within five minutes of the closing time, the auction is extended by five minutes. This continues until no bids come in for five consecutive minutes.

This process more closely mimics the traditional auctions. "The hammer doesn't fall until the paddles are no longer raised," says Just Glass co-founder Reyne Haines of Cincinnati, Ohio.

Bidders like Kathy Antetomaso, 26, of Woonsocket, R.I., feel the auction extension would be the fairest way to handle last minute bids.

"This would only help both the seller and the bidder, which basically means everyone wins." ☐

how to Sniping tips from those who know

- Open two or three windows – one for following the bidding of others and two pre-loaded with your bids. Have a good modem and ISP. Bid at least 50 percent higher than the last showing bid or the known reserve.

– Stu Horn

- Give yourself at least five minutes before the auction closes to get ready to snipe. And find bargains by looking for items about to end that still have no bids.

– Pam McCutcheon

- Snipe with the maximum amount you would want to pay. Don't waste your time bidding a dollar or two over the showing bid. It may not work.

– Beverlee Resch

- Refresh or reload the page every few seconds and if you really want the item, be prepared to scramble to increase your bid if another snipe comes through.

– Dennis Anderson

the cherry on a sundae."

– Leif Gellein, online auction seller



Tattling tatter takes on Titan

Heavyweight of lace crushes all comers
by Angela Webster

Dorothy had the Wicked Witch, Luke Skywalker had Darth Vader, Bill Clinton had Ken Starr. I had Piebo.

She entered my life when I discovered eBay's tatting shuttles. Nope, we're not discussing badminton, buses or NASA here; tatting shuttles are small needlework tools used to make lace. Vintage shuttles are prized by collectors, and are made of silver, bone and ivory. The more modest shuttles are made of steel, celluloid or Bakelite.

New to eBay and therefore somewhat sensitive, I was routinely outbid by Piebo.

Sure, she would let me win a tacky metal shuttle here and there.

But let me find something exotic, some horn-inlaid-with-mother-of-pearl number, and Piebo snatched it. Bidding \$100 here, \$200 there, she was ruthless in her quest. She was Queen of the Tatting Shuttles with no regard for the tatting peasants below.

I was starting to take things a bit personally.

Another collector e-mailed to grouse about Piebo's monopoly. "And what does she do with all those casino chips?"

Casino chips?

Searching items she'd bid on, I found her specialties were tatting shuttles and casino chips.

Great. I was being consistently outbid by a professional gambler who happened to tat.

She was probably slouched right now before the gaming tables in Reno.

"I'm in," she was telling the dealer, cigarette dangling from her lips. An ornately carved ivory shuttle flew through her fingers as she tatted edgings for the sheets on her heart-shaped motel waterbed.

Her tatting smelled of Pall Malls and Jim Beam, but it was made of the finest threads her ill-gotten money could buy.

The day came when Piebo stopped buying "my" shuttles.

Having conquered that end of the market, she now bid exclusively on shuttles I could only dream about.

Then suddenly, Piebo's name vanished from the bidder lists altogether, rather like the Wicked Witch of the West in a pool of water.

I wondered what happened. Did Piebo die in Reno? Did some gambling godfather take her out while she was making picots and double stitches?

I worried but drew comfort from the fact I was now winning some tatting shuttles.

As I prepared to bid on an unusual aqua shuttle recently, I couldn't help reminiscing about my old nemesis. Piebo would have loved this shuttle. It had metal "eyelets" in the center, and I'd never seen anything like it on eBay before.

When my initial bid wasn't even enough to get me in the ballgame, I quit. A year of losing to Piebo taught me the handy lesson that I can't have everything I want.

Checking the auction later, I found the winning bid of \$90.50 belonged to Piebo!

Although pleased she wasn't dead or liquidated, I nevertheless braced for the bidding disappointments her return was bound to signal.

One fine day I spied a celluloid tatting shuttle, one so beautiful I could hear angels singing. Containing all the colors of the rainbow, this was surely how tatting shuttles looked in Heaven.

Entering my bid, I prepared for the worst. I was indeed outbid, but in a surprise development, so was Piebo.

Lurking there on my computer screen was the name of a new opponent: YONKU.

Now, Yonku may have won this battle, but she'll have to get past Piebo and me to win the shuttle war.

Editor's note—We got to wondering whether the mighty Piebo, in her avaricious quest for ever-fancier shuttles, was even aware of Angela's presence on the bidding battlefield. Though mildly concerned about a volatile reaction on Piebo's part, we called her anyway.

Turns out that Piebo is actually a thoughtful, well-spoken executive secretary in Seattle, who delights in tracing the ownership history of the vintage shuttles she collects. At age 62, she is six months from retirement, and has plenty of greenbacks to plunk down on the nattier tatting shuttles.

She cannot recall doing battle with our Angela, a journalist from Georgia. She has faced off against the mysterious Yonku, however, who would not respond to our e-mail. Piebo shares her registered eBay ID with her husband, who collects—last-minute bets anyone?—casino chips.



Tatter's ammunition: shuttles in repose

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The Vampire Companion, Volume 1, Number 2, 1991 issue, published by the Innovative Corporation.



Anne Rice: Comic relief?

Anne Rice will have 100 percent control over the creative process as *The Tale of the Body Thief*, the fourth novel in her popular Vampire Chronicles series, is adapted into 12 comic books. As reported in *Comics Buyer's Guide*, the first issue will be released in September by Sicilian Dragon Publishing, a company founded by Rice's executive director and business manager, Ross Tafaro. Rice has had her works translated into comics before, and they haven't

lived up to her standards. With this new project she's in control of her own characters, and her destiny. "There is nothing to stop us from creating, not only an action-packed and successful comic book, but also a work so skilled and so polished that a new audience will be found for *The Tale of the Body Thief* among people who have never bought a comic book before," she said.



Barry Halper

"The Babe got out of the car, and I went under the barricade and asked him to sign this book on a blank page. He didn't talk, he just signed it!"

—Barry Halper, 57, who is liquidating his 50-year accumulation of baseball treasures, a collection which is said to rival that of the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, N.Y. It is made up of over 100,000 items that have a total appraised value of more than \$40 million. Within the past year, Halper sold \$5 million worth of memorabilia to Major League Baseball. The majority of the remaining 90,000 items have been consigned to Sotheby's to be sold both at live and online auctions, beginning with a Sept. 23 event in New York. www.sothebys.com

signs you're an eBay junkie

10. Empty boxes and bubble wrap make great presents.
9. You know postal zip codes better than any US Postal Service worker.
8. Your children hide their toys, lest you "eBay" them.
7. When your auctions aren't doing well, you sit in front of the computer pressing "reload" every five seconds, as if *that* will speed it up.
6. You snicker at antique dealers who have shops, the poor fools.
5. You go through all your relatives' cupboards looking for good Ebay material.
4. The thought of scanning photos makes you physically ill.
3. You curse at total strangers when they list the same item as you, at the same time, with lower reserves.
2. You live in fear of bad feedback.
1. A fuzzy bathrobe is appropriate work attire.

— eBay junkie Jess Anderson



Michael Dunn

First eBay Magazine subscriber

Michael Dunn beat cancer, and he also beat the entire nation to the mailbox to become the first subscriber to *eBay Magazine*. Dunn, of Delafield, Wis., saw an announcement about the upcoming magazine in *Toy Shop*, a Krause Publications magazine for toy collectors. The announcement was intended only to pique readers' interest, and included no subscription information. But Dunn called Krause, asked around, and eventually spoke with marketing director Richard Barrett, who told him he could be the first subscriber if his check arrived within the next few days. "I got off the phone, wrote the check, and drove three miles to the post office to make sure I got it there first," Dunn said. A retired route salesman for Frito Lay Inc., Dunn fought a long, successful fight against cancer, and has been

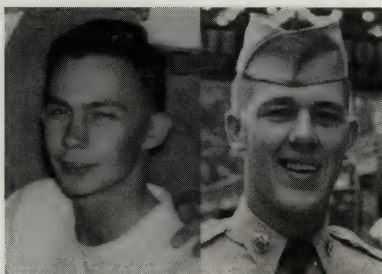
cancer-free for over two years. He recently bought a computer and has big plans for buying and selling his toy car collection on eBay, which includes some old DNKY, Hot Wheels and Matchbox toy cars.



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Charles Confer John Compton

Reconnecting on the Net

After nearly 50 years, Army buddies John Compton and Charles Confer have been reunited with the help of an eBay seller. The two drifted apart after enduring basic training in the Alabama heat, and the winding tale of their reunion began when Compton bought a set

of Woolworth price labels from Indiana antique dealer Ed Schwartz. Compton mentioned to Schwartz that his friend had lived nearby. Two phone calls later, Schwartz was able to report that Confer had been found. Confer, 69, is retired and lives in Corona, Calif. Compton, 68, lives in Honeoye Falls, New York. Even though the two live on opposite sides of the country, they'll keep corresponding and maybe even meet, to "see if he looks as old as I do," as Compton said. "He's the handsome one, anyhow," said Confer.



Dave Clark

E-commerce insight

His very job title tells of a transformation in the way Americans shop — vice president of e-commerce for Warner Bros. Studio Stores. In this newly created position, Dave Clark is leading our favorite Looney Tunes, along with Scooby-Doo and many others, into the information age, via www.wbstore.com.

What kind of an impact is the Internet having on the way people shop?

I think it's definitely a revolution as opposed to an evolution. There is increasing 'buying' on the Internet; there isn't much 'shopping'. If you look at what's really sold it's been music, it's been videos, and it's been books because you can go in by title ... I think part of what's changing is people are more and more comfortable. Even my parents, who are in their late 60s, early 70s, now are subscribing to America Online.



Peggy Kutila

Soapy, a.k.a. Peggy Kutila

Part of the fun of online life is learning your friends' secrets. Peggy Kutila, known in the eBay Cafe as "Soapy," was as slippery as the best of them when it came to revealing facts about her offline life. First there's the mystery behind the name "Soapy"; then she was hesitant to reveal her age ("I always tell them I'm 84."), and she also let it slip that, yes, she's married ("They don't know that either."). In the Cafe she attends online baby showers that spill over into real life, tells jokes and offers advice for newcomers. She has her own business, Somewear in Time, based in Colorado Springs, Colo.; she sells her homemade goods on eBay and has her own explanation for why some people are addicted to online chats. It's as simple as this: they're "word people."

"The rest is history — including Stretch."

Forrest Marsh, 30, refers to the fateful, childhood day he decided to find out what was inside his 1976 Stretch Armstrong. Presently he searches eBay for its replacement, having seen the toy — Mint in Box — sell for \$700.

He is determined to stick to a price of \$500, proving that even eBay employees get outbid. Marsh, a San Mateo, Calif., resident,



Forrest Marsh

is trade show coordinator for the online auction house and can be seen in cities across the eastern and mid-western United States as part of the From Our Homepage to Your Hometown Tour. Find out more about the tour at www.ebay.com, under the "other happenings" link.



Virginia Stewart

Barbies of paradise: up for sale

Connoisseurs of Barbie may imagine heaven as a toy store that locked its doors in the late '60s. A piece of that heaven exists in The Virginia

Stewart Vintage Barbie Collection, to be sold Sept. 23 via a 10-day eBay auction. Stewart worked for Mattel from 1950-1975, amassing a comprehensive array of Barbie goods. At home in Venice, Calif., Stewart packed it all away. When she died in 1998, her sons inherited it all. The upcoming auction will be hyperlinked to a Web site that will feature more than 100 pictures of the 200-plus item collection, which includes Outfit #1678 (Pan Am Stewardess) NRFB and the Ken Trousseau Gift Set, mint in box. To participate, do a keyword search for the name Virginia Stewart in the Barbie category.



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(Your auction alert service.)

Atlantique City

Lose yourself in finds, from history to Hollywood

by Sharon Korbeck



Promoter extraordinaire Norm Schaut calls it “the greatest show on earth,” ... and few who have participated would disagree.

In his days on the road, Schaut would have been referring to the Ringling Bros. circus. Today, however, Schaut’s “greatest show” is Atlantique City — a twice-annual, 10-1/2-acre cavalcade of antiques and collectibles that takes place in Atlantic City, N.J.

The two-day event routinely draws more than 50,000 visitors. In fact, in its old home on the historic Boardwalk, it shattered Atlantic City Convention Center attendance records its first year.

“It didn’t just grow into the largest show in the world,” Schaut said of the event, which he founded in 1986. “It started that way.”

Fresh ocean air awakened early-risers who lined almost eight city blocks to gain admittance. In 1997, Atlantique City gave up seagulls and street vendors to move three city blocks to a new building.

Today antique aficionados, interior decorators, art fanatics and the simply curious show up in mid-October or late March for a \$15

walk through the hallowed halls.

It’s a visit revered by regulars.

“It’s overwhelming to the first timer. The aisles go on forever,” said Paul Fink, a Connecticut dealer in vintage board games.

To prepare, newcomers can visit www.atlantiquecity.com prior to attending the show for a floor plan, list of exhibitors and other information.

At the show, computers continue to aid both newcomers and serious collectors. Need to find a postcard deal-

er pronto? Want to hit only the glassware dealers? The Computographic Locator System contains more than 1,100 categories that can be targeted; a printout then directs shoppers to the specified dealers.

"The serious collector is looking to go to Atlantique City," Fink added. "Dealers tend to bring their better things."

Those familiar with the show find its enormity easy to describe, and visitors use any number of adjectives to describe the event.

What words does Schaut use? He answers the question with a question: "What would you use to describe the place when you walk in and, were we not there, you could play 12 Super Bowls simultaneously?"

The analogy certainly illustrates the scope of Atlantique City, which adds up to about 12 miles of walking from start to finish. An original Picasso is among the items that have made appearances, along with Marilyn Monroe's bra from *Some Like it Hot*, and Babe Ruth's cashmere overcoat and stadium locker key.

Schaut himself is just as colorful as the items offered at his show. This ultimate marketing man was pitching everything from razors to ice skaters in his former life as an ad man.

As early as the 1950s, he worked as a press agent for Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey — the kings of the traveling circus. He often jokes about his days spent "on the payroll with 52 elephants."

In the 1960s, as a writer/creative

director for Benton & Bowles, a New York ad agency, Schaut once found a large box from Procter & Gamble outside his door. The contents? Charmin toilet tissue.

Schaut cut the top off the box, grabbed a Magic Marker and inked the now-famous phrase on the box — "Please don't squeeze the Charmin."

Luck was with Schaut that day. Procter & Gamble liked the idea and ran with it, creating one of the most memorable commercials of the 1960s and '70s.

"It was no more dramatic than that," Schaut said of the familiar ad campaign.

The commercials starred Don Wilson as the kindly shopkeeper, Mr. Whipple,

who urged customers to refrain from squeezing. This year, the commercials are being revived, once again with Wilson as Whipple. And Schaut's legacy lives on — kind of like it does with Atlantique City.

"I'll never retire. I love what I do. Monday mornings have always been a highlight," Schaut said.

How many of us can say that?

To find out more about Atlantique City's fall show or to order tickets, contact Brimfield Associates at www.atlantiquecity.com, or call (800) 526-2724.

Sharon Korbeck is editor of Warman's Today's Collector, an antiques and collectibles magazine from Krause Publications.



These rare Disney marionettes sold for \$12,000 at a recent Atlantique City show.

Day Trippin'

If you find yourself on the coast for the Atlantique City show this fall, New York City is just a day's drive away. Here's a glimpse of some related happenings for fans of antiquities.

- **Oct. 15-17**, New York City, Gramercy Park Antiques and Textiles Show, (212) 255-0020
- **Oct. 16-17**, New York City, Antique and Collectible Marketplace, Grand Bazaar, (914) 273-1578

Atlantique City by the numbers

Next Show Date: **Oct. 16-17, 1999**

No. of Booths: **1,600**

No. of Blocks off Boardwalk: **3**

No. of Pay Phones: **226**

No. of Regions Represented:

41 states, **17** countries

Percent of Pre-World War II Items for

Sale: **70**

Percent of Post-WWII Items for Sale: **30**



Christopher Columbus crucifix

Said this Tiffany's crucifix, which contains bone fragments from the remains of Christopher Columbus, was one of Atlantique City's top-selling items. It sold for \$1.2 million.

Highest Price Paid for an Item:

Show promoter Norman Schaut

Top five collectible areas represented at Atlantique City

1. Playthings (Toys, Dolls, Bears, Games and Trains)
2. Glass (Depression, Art Glass, perfume bottles)
3. Pottery & Porcelain (Roseville, Weller, Limoges)
4. Jewelry (Estate, Silver, Victorian)
5. Furniture



c. 1935 perfume bottle, \$750 from Monsen and Baer.



Collecting as an investment? Look to your trash

by Daisy Cain

Think back to a time when boys put baseball cards in the spokes of their bikes. When girls broke the arms off Steiff teddy bears and the heads off Barbies, and when Moms threw this broken junk away.

When first introduced, the most valuable items in every collecting field either served a purpose and were used; or they served no purpose and were thrown away. Nothing is born collectible.

That said, let's retract it and say: Nothing that is born collectible is likely to increase in value.

It's the items that are destined to be trash — a theater ticket from Star Wars' *Episode One* (even better, an untorn ticket), a box of bandages featuring characters from the box office hit — that will likely increase in value.

Items purchased as collectibles, on the other hand, have no function, so their chances of surviving through the years are much higher. More supply, we all know, leads to less demand and lower prices.

The usage factor even affects values in the market of limited edition collectibles, which is manufactured to create high demand for a product in low supply. With Lladró figurines, for instance, pieces with flowers, or with limbs that climb into space at unreasonable angles, command higher prices at auction. It's not because they're prettier, but mainly because they break more often, so fewer exist.

When collecting for investment purposes, also think about how much nostalgia is attached to

items that have been replaced by newer and faster gizmos. Anything to do with roller skates makes me laugh. Such items have become strangely attractive, and likely valuable to anyone who grew up pre-inline skates.

It also happened to records, and is now happening to laser discs and Atari systems. Sure, they're a dime a dozen today, but what about 20 years from now?

Thrown away have been oodles of ticket stubs from Elvis concerts, and newspapers reporting the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. Conversely, many more people kept newspapers reporting the moon landing, and the assassination of John F. Kennedy as mementos. The result? They hold less value today than some of the others.

(An aside: If you're looking for future value, don't even *think* about keeping those one-shot tribute magazines that are coming out to commemorate John F. Kennedy, Jr.)

A final tip for collectors looking to hit it rich: Follow the lead of your children. In 1994, my brother bought a silly \$5 plush platypus. I'm not sure when he ripped the heart-shaped tag off this first generation Beanie Baby, but it was probably before we left the store.

This is why that platypus will always be valuable in mint condition, no matter what happens to the Beanie Baby market. With its rare coloration, it continues to sell at auction for upwards of \$500, because not many survived — little boys and girls everywhere *used* these earliest Beanies.

Whenever your children love something so much they destroy it, it wouldn't be a bad idea to buy another and squirrel it away. If nothing else, you can bring it out in 20 years and make them squeal. And if they'll squeal, chances are thousands of other grown-up children will pay exorbitant prices to have one of their own.

Daisy Cain oversees eBay Magazine's analysis of collecting and pop culture trends.

nothing trashy here

Look in the attic to see if the first five survived your childhood; then check on the rest in your kids' closets.

- 1. Barbie clothes.** Nothing homemade, we're talking Mattel label all the way. (Beautiful Bride, #1698, mint in package, \$2,100)
- 2. Comic books.** 1970s cartoons are back on the air; Prices for Hanna-Barbera comics ('69-71) are \$10 and rising.
- 3. Hot Wheels.** Anything old is coveted. Mongoose & Snake Drag Race Set, near mint, \$200-\$300.
- 4. Buddy L** pressed steel trucks. Just an example: Auto Wrecker, #209, 1928-31, mint, \$5,000.
- 5. Fisher-Price.** Did you chew on a wooden Little People? They can be bought and sold for \$3 ... for now.
- 6. Sports cards.** Derek Jeter's '93 Upper Deck SP #279 is at \$90 and rising, along with his batting average.
- 7. Comic books.** Pokémon — a \$10 return on a \$2.95 investment isn't bad.
- 8. Hot Wheels.** Keep any Treasure Hunts in the package! The white '67 Camaro from '95 is worth \$175-\$200.
- 9. Laser discs.** They're a dime a dozen today, just like records were years ago. Look to the Star Wars movies as a long-standing investment.
- 10. Fisher-Price.** Plastic New School from 1988 (#2550), mint, \$30.

Top tip: Don't forget the less popular characters; a 1953 Duchess Doll of *Peter Pan's* Wendy commands up to \$325.

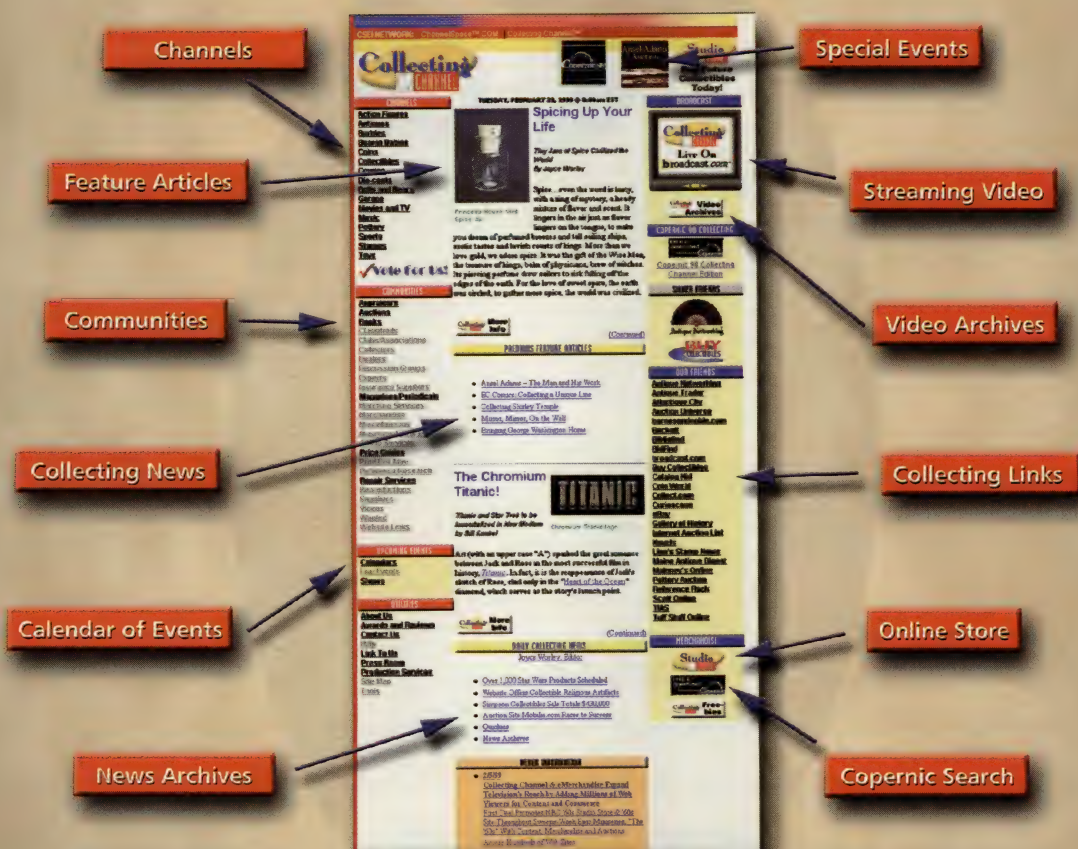
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Log on to QVC Presents FFANY Shoes On Sale, Monday, October 4 at 7pm ET

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The most valuable Pokémon cards are first edition holofoils (right); they're worth twice as much as first editions (middle), and up to four times as much as cards from the unlimited set (left).

Pikachu to you, too

by Joyce Greenholdt

When Nintendo launched its Pokémon video game for Game Boy in America last fall, it hoped to duplicate the massive success the game enjoyed in Japan. And with three years' worth of books, comics, games, and an animated TV show ripe for translation to a new audience, Pokémon was prepared to make a big splash.

It did. The video game has sold millions of copies, the cartoon is a top-rated kids' show, and a steady stream of Pokémon merchandise, both imported and domestically produced, is available for fans to eat, wear, and play with. A full-length movie is on the way as well.

An abbreviation of "pocket monsters", Pokémon combines the appeal of virtual pets, adventure games and trading cards. In the video game, players travel through a virtual world finding, capturing and training the 150 different Pokémon.

In the realm of Pokémon

merchandise, fans' options are many and the supply, for the most part, is steady. Some of the toys imported from Japan make regular appearances in online auctions, as do the promotional toys and Pokémon beanbags which were available at Kentucky Fried Chicken during Pokémon's launch. Most prices are not excessive.

For the KFC beanbags expect to pay \$5-\$7. The KFC promotional toys are worth \$3.

The one item that has been in short supply, however, is the American edition of the Pokémon trading-card game, from Seattle-based company Wizards of the Coast.

Almost immediately after the first Pokémon cards were released, Wizards of the Coast found that customer demand was outstripping the company's ability to print new cards; supplies continue to remain tight.

Many stores place a limit on how many foil packs or starter decks they'll sell to a single customer. Wizards of the Coast President and CEO Peter Adkison said that the company is continuing its efforts to meet the seemingly insatiable demand for the game.

In the meantime, because of the

tight supply and because of the nature of the game, Pokémon cards are widely available on the Internet, both as individual cards and in sets.

The highest demand is for the 16 first-edition holofoil cards. An unlimited edition of the basic Pokémon set, including the rare holofoil cards, is also available. Wizards of the Coast released pre-constructed "theme" decks and recently released the Jungle expansion for the game, which adds 64 new cards to the 102 originally available. The Japanese game cards have been widely imported to help meet demand, as well.

The big question on collectors' minds: Just how many kids are actually *playing* the trading-card game?

That question may be answered, as there are now 40 Action Flipz lenticular cards available from Artbox, and Topps is producing traditional trading cards for Pokémon. The kids who just want pictures of their favorite Pokémon are likely to abandon the playing cards, which could diminish the frenzy over these little critters.

Joyce Greenholdt is an associate editor for Comics Buyer's Guide.

trading cards

First edition Pokémon trading cards (Wizards of the Coast):

Complete set (102 cards)	\$325
Set of holofoil cards (16)	\$170
Blastoise holofoil card	\$21
Charizard holofoil card	\$35
Raichu holofoil card	\$19
Venusaur holofoil card	\$26
Zapdos holofoil card	\$20

Top Tip: The Pocket Monsters Second Anniversary Pikachu Birthday holofoil card sold online for \$700-plus.

trends beanbags

Beanies, move over for these babies

by Shawn Brecka

It was a case of being in the right place in the right time ... and with the right technology. Perhaps no collectible has gained as much popularity and prominence via the Internet as has Beanie Babies and the rest of the beanbag field.

From nothingness sprang a Goliath hobby; beanbags have become a permanent part of the American landscape. A simple search on "Beanie Baby" at AltaVista nets 24,000 hits. Try "Beanies" and that count more than doubles.

While Beanies experienced some serious price fluctuations in 1998, the market has been stable for the past year. Price stability and continued collector activity in the new and secondary markets are the marks of a hobby that's in good health.

I've been asked on several occasions by non- or novice collectors if the Beanie market is dead. Quite the contrary. While some people left the hobby in 1998, there were still enough willing to buy new and old Beanies to convince me that this hobby has entered the realm of being a legitimate collecting area that will remain viable for years to come.

Scooby-Doo vs. Pooh

Still, Warner Brothers (Studio Store Bean Bags) and Disney (Mini Bean Bag Plush) have taken a nibble out of the Ty Beanie Baby pie. Both of these cartoon-based lines are doing very well. In fact, Disney declares beanbags as the top-selling item in its Disney Stores.



"We continue to be overwhelmed by our guests' response to collect Disney Mini Bean Bag Plush," said Thomas A. Heymann, president of The Disney Store — Worldwide.

It's obvious why these two lines are as popular as they are. It's the characters — characters we grew up watching and that we now watch with our kids. In Disney, it's Mickey Mouse, Winnie the Pooh and their friends. At WB, it's Scooby-Doo, Bugs Bunny, Tweety and Taz. To date, dozens of different Poohs and Mickeys have been offered from Disney, and more than 20 different Scooby-Doos and Tweety Birds from Warner.

Look for the popularity of these characters to grow.

More beans in your diet

Advertising and promotional beanbags are a sound place to enter this collecting area. Many are available through direct promotions (buy a box of cereal or go to the restaurant), while some can be ordered from the companies' Internet sites. In addition to the beanbags, you can actually get a pretty balanced diet by collecting advertising beanbags:

Breakfast: Cap'n Crunch, CoCo Wheats, Life Cereal, General Mills and Kellogg's cereals.

Warner Bros. and Disney beanbags have come on strong, biting into Beanie Babies' hold on the market.

Lunch: A&W, McDonald's, Chef Jr. Pasta, Chick-Fil-A, Dairy Queen, Frullati Café, Jimmy Buffet's Margaritaville Cafe, KFC, Oscar Mayer, Starkist Tuna.

Dinner: Bob Evans Restaurant, Bubba Gump Shrimp Co., Chuck E. Cheese, Little Caesar's, Old Country Buffet.

Bachelor food: Spam.

*Shawn Brecka is the author of three beanbag books, including the newly published **Bean Family Pocket Guide, Fall 1999** (Krause Publications).*

Follow the bouncing bean

1997 Warner Brothers Scooby-Doo Reindeer

1997	\$10
1998	\$225
1999	\$175

Beanie Baby Libearty the bear

1997	\$120
1998	\$375
1999	\$300

Disney's "Test" Mickey Mouse

1997	\$45
1998	\$80
1999	\$45

Top tip: The second club kit and Beanie Baby from Ty Inc. — it's Platinum! — is selling for \$20-\$30 in online auctions.

First things first: What's a first?

by Mark Rich

First editions. The words tumble off the tongues of those even faintly into book collecting. Everybody wants them, and they rank among the most elusive of collectors' items. They are also a complicated subject; much of the difficulty lies with identification.

"The term 'first edition' is sort of misleading," said Patrick Cather of Cather & Brown Books of Birmingham, Ala. "The word is frequently used incorrectly. Seasoned collectors use it loosely on modern books, from Twain on up to the present."

Only first editions, or the first printing of those, have value — and just because a book is a first edition doesn't mean an immediate price boost.

Because initial print runs have become so large, most contemporary first editions — those by hot authors like Stephen King, John Grisham, Michael Crichton and Tom Clancy — are not likely to significantly increase in value.

"Ninety-eight percent have no value, literary or otherwise," Cather said.

Not all contemporary authors should be overlooked, however, and first editions of hot authors' early books can be especially collectible.

So what exactly is a first edition?

In broad terms, first editions are the first printed state of a text in book form. For modern books, collectors check three places to determine if a book is a first edition — the inside jacket flap, the title page, and the title page's *verso*, or reverse side.

The inside flap must have a

price to clear it of being a club edition (which would have little to no collector value); the title page date, if any, must match the copyright on the *verso*; and if the copyright page has a number or letter sequence, such as "abcdeffgh," it must start with "1" or "a."

From there it becomes complicated. Some books must have the words "first edition." In others, the words "first edition" are misleading, since they are found on later printings.

And don't forget it has to be in book form. Even though Edgar Rice Burroughs' *Tarzan and the Jewels of Opar* first appeared in *All-Story Cavalier* in 1916, the "real" first edition is the book published by McClurg in 1918.

A first edition of this book recently sold in an Internet auction for \$50, even though the book is worth upwards of \$125. The reason for the price difference is another rule to follow when collecting first editions: no dust jacket, no big bucks.

As in other areas of collecting, nothing can replace experience and knowledge; fortunately, more and more experienced booksellers are moving online.

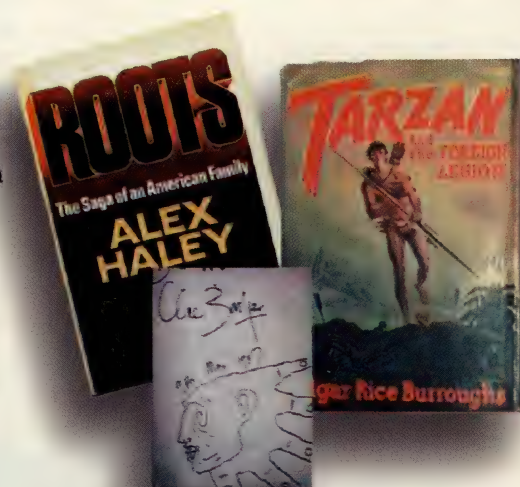
George Skanse, Jr., of the Book Gallery in El Paso, Texas, is just coming to the Internet after 36 years in the trade.

Specializing in "Texana" and the Southwest, he finds such authors as Tom Lea and Leon Metz in high demand at eBay.

Are quality first editions still attractive to his customers? He recently sold a signed first of Cormac McCarthy's *All the Pretty Horses* for \$400.

Like a good dust jacket, the author's signature adds value to any book — that goes double for a first edition.

Mark Rich is a book collector, writer, and columnist for Toy Shop and Toy Cars magazines.



Alex Haley's *Roots* sold for \$50 online; Clive Barker's doodle and sig. (center) turn a \$25 first edition into a \$95 version; and Burroughs' *Tarzan and the Foreign Legion*, in fine condition (very good dust jacket), sold in an online auction for more than \$65.

price check

prices realized
Here are some recent prices realized from online auction sites. The first condition is for the book, the second for the dust jacket.

Edgar Rice Burroughs, *Tarzan and the Foreign Legion* Tarzana, Calif.: ERB, 1947, first edition, illo. John Coleman Burroughs; fine/very good. **\$66.40**

John Grisham, *The Firm* NY: Doubleday, 1991, first edition; fine/fine. **\$77**

Thomas Harris, *The Silence of the Lambs*, NY: St. Martin's, 1988, first edition; near fine/near fine. **\$36**

Ernest Hemingway, *Across the River and Into the Trees* NY: Scribner's, 1950, first edition; very good/no dust jacket, owner's name written on end paper. **\$102**

James Joyce, *Finnegan's Wake* NY: Viking, first U.S. edition, with "First Published May 1939" on copyright page; near fine/very good, second-state dust jacket. **\$350**

Top tip: Dust jackets didn't routinely appear on books until the '20s; some are worth more than the books inside.

Don't get rooked by a rookie

by Rocky Landsverk

Collecting sports autographs has gone from the closet to the penthouse.

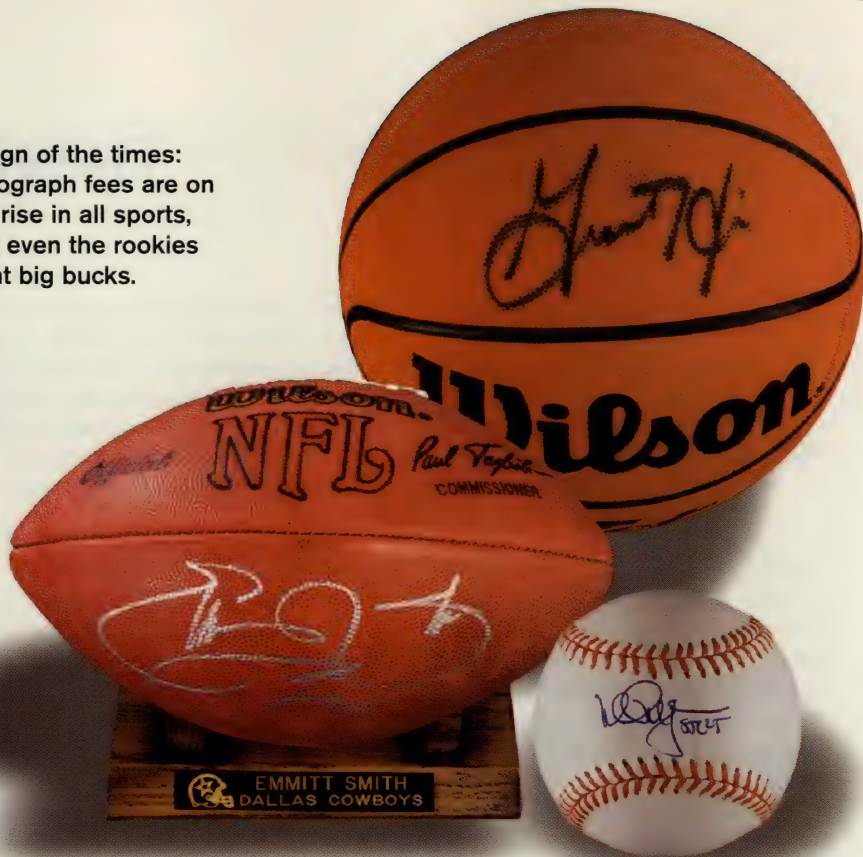
A decade ago, signatures of sports stars were relatively inexpensive; in most cases free. An explosion in the popularity of autographed memorabilia this decade, along with the precipitous increase in players' salaries, has resulted in signatures that cost more than a ticket to watch the athletes play. And in the past couple of years, autograph fees have skyrocketed for players who haven't even taken a snap, shot a free throw or batted against Randy Johnson.

The primary beneficiaries of this trend are the players. "In total volume, in dollar amounts, we have already doubled what we did all of last season," for autograph signings, said Dawn Ridley Nash, assistant VP/trading cards and collectibles for the NFLPA. "By the end of the fiscal year, we expect we might triple them."

Autograph fees are on a corresponding increase in all sports, particularly for rookies. "As salaries go up, you can naturally expect that these deals are going to be less important to the players, so they need more money to make it worth their while," said Ken Goldin, who represents all of super-agent Scott Boras' players, including Greg Maddux, J.D. Drew and Alex Rodriguez. "J.D. Drew last year charged under \$10, but the demand is so overwhelming ... we have raised his prices consistently starting at the end of last season."

Increased demand from the trading card sector — which has flocked to autographed inserts — is a large part of that equation. "Today, just about every card company has an autograph program of some sort," said Steve

A sign of the times: Autograph fees are on the rise in all sports, and even the rookies want big bucks.



Dubin, director of celebrity relations for Fleer/SkyBox.

The result: NFL rookie Ricky Williams, whose agent is Master P., charges up to \$40 per autograph, double last year's prices for top rookies Peyton Manning and Ryan Leaf, and probably the all-time record for a rookie autographing fee. Top pick Tim Couch is reportedly charging more than \$20 per signature.

"I think it's crazy," Goldin said. "Anybody with Ricky Williams and Tim Couch autographs is going to get crushed. They're way too high."

Autograph prices for the top superstars are also going through the roof. Brett Favre, already a star five years ago, has raised his autograph price from \$25 to \$75 in those five years. John Elway, now a two-time Super Bowl winner, charges at least \$100 per signature. By the time the promoter takes his cut, that rises to \$150 per signature.

Complicating the issue are non-authenticated autographs, usually obtained from fans at the hotel or ballpark. They'll cost you half the retail price of an autograph from a respected retail outlet, but you run the risk of buying a forgery from someone who never met the player. Our advice:

- Be extremely cautious when buying autographs in general.

- Don't get caught up with a certificate of authenticity. Plenty of fakes come with one.

- Buy autographs from dealers and promoters who recently had a signing (at a public show or in private) with the athlete. To find out about those signings, read hobby publications.

- Learn about the market and which promoters and retailers often deal with each athlete.

- If the deal you're offered seems too good to be true, it probably is.

Rocky Landsverk is an associate editor at Sports Collectors Digest.

sports

Autographed Photos

Player	1995	1999
Brett Favre	\$30	\$80
Joe Montana	\$40	\$80
Dan Marino	\$50	\$80
Michael Jordan	\$100	\$300
Cal Ripken	\$50	\$75
Barry Sanders	\$40	\$75
Wayne Gretzky	\$50	\$75
John Elway	\$60	\$150
Avg. Baseball Player	\$10	\$15
Top Draft Pick	\$15	\$35

Top tip: Look for autographed photos of NBA Minnesota Timberwolves' Kevin Garnett; an 8x10 is \$30 and climbing.



Expect McFarlane's Blue Meanie to gain value quickly.

Darth Maul falls to Fabs in toy tussle

by Sharon Korbeck

This season's hottest toys will leave you black and blue. And not just from the crush in the toy store aisle.

This summer's hot toy — *Star Wars*' dark and nefarious Darth Maul — remains an elusive villain in black. Then there's the reappearance of an older villain in town this fall; The Blue Meanie.

That rotund cartoonish blob from The Beatles' *Yellow Submarine* film is back. Because the 1968 film is being re-released this fall by Sony Signatures, *The Yellow Submarine* will float to the top of the crop of this fall's must-have toys.

More than two dozen licensees — with products from action figures and boxer shorts to lighters and silk ties — will entice collectors. But it's likely the action figures made by McFarlane Toys will be the tough finds and the classic collectibles.

Aside from some squat caricatured figures of the Fab Four made by Remco in the 1960s, there have never been any true action figures of the quartet. So this fall's figures have several things going for them — they fill a void for *Yellow Submarine* fans, they're reasonably priced (\$8-\$10 each), they're incredibly kitschy (hey, the '60s are back) and they're crafted by Todd McFarlane. Who, you ask?

For the uninitiated, McFarlane is the thirty-something writer/artist who abandoned the comics industry institution (Marvel Comics) to break out on his own. Along the way, he not only founded his own comics company (Image Comics), but a toy company that has made the big boys at Hasbro and Mattel stand up and take notice.

Long story short, McFarlane scores big with collectors — particularly Gen X-ers who "get" his sense of humor, timing and creativity.

That's what he's done with *Yellow Submarine*. The figures are dead-on likenesses. And his inclusion of figures like the Glove, Jeremy and the Blue Meanie are master strokes. He knows his audience intimately and never fails to execute an idea through to its minute details.

Start combing stores in late August for these must-haves (some Internet dealers may start posting figures for auction even sooner). Prices for rare and hard-to-find figures, like the anticipated Blue Meanie, are likely to soar immediately upon release.

By the way, if you're still stuck on *Star Wars*, you're in a dwindling crowd. Stores nationwide are beginning to throw Obi-Wan and Princess Amidala into clearance bins. But don't expect to find Darth Maul there. The 3-3/4-inch and 12-inch figures of the notorious black and red Sith warrior are scarce on shelves, and each is cur-

rently selling for double its original price.

So while clearance bins will soon be crawling with dozens of the annoying Jar Jar Binks figures, hold tight to Darth Maul. He may be one of the only Episode I figures to retain the Force (and value) in years to come.

Better bets for Star Wars fans? Pick up the obscurities like bandages, toothpaste tubes, toothbrushes, pencils. Everyone's buying the toys — go for the trivial and it'll look much cooler to a collector 10 years from now.

Sharon Korbeck is editor of Krause Publications' Toy Shop magazine. Her annual trek to New York's American International Toy Fair keeps her on the cutting edge of the toy industry.

Beatle mania

Most of the coolest Fab Four stuff — like toiletries and school supplies bearing the images of Liverpool's favorite sons — originated in the 1960s; finding it today is tougher than trying to decipher the song "I am the Walrus." Here's a look at some truly cool vintage Beatles stuff to put on your want list.

- Yellow Submarine alarm clock, 1968, **\$4,000**
- Beatles toy banjo, Mastro, 1964, **\$800**
- Bobbin' head dolls, 1960s, **\$750 ea**
- Beatles hair pomade, **\$100**
- Beatles talcum powder tin, **\$600**
- Beatle Bar candy bar wrapper 1960s, **\$50**
- Autographed photo, all four Beatles, **\$2,500-\$4,000**
- Beatles Flip Your Wig board game, **\$125**
- Beatles gumball machine rings, set of four, **\$50**



Autographs

Out with the certificate, in with DNA

Online auctions are ripe breeding grounds for certificates of authenticity, and when those things multiply, it pretty much guarantees the signatures are fake. In the world of sports autographs, new authenticating processes like PSA/DNA — a system that places a clear strip on the actual product, and matches that to a numbered certificate — will make the market safer, which will in turn make it more profitable, and popular. The online auction company, eBay (www.ebay.com), has established a relationship with Collector's Universe, the company responsible for PSA/DNA and other authenticating services like Professional Coin Grading Service (PCGS) (www.collectorsuniverse.com). Dealers in sports autographs, as well as those in other autographed memorabilia, can now use such services to bring a little security to sight unseen trading. Two Web sites have been set up through eBay to help online auction users access Collector's Universe's services: www.PSADNA.com/eBay, and www.pages.ebay.com/aw/safeharbor-auth-autographs.html.

One hundred guitars, \$5 million-plus.

All belonged to Eric Clapton, and the money raised from their sale in June benefitted the musician's Crossroads Centre for alcohol and drug dependency, located on the Caribbean island of Antigua. The Christie's New York auction was held in conjunction with VH-1, and the grand total — \$5,072,350 — exceeded presale expectations four times over.

SOLD! \$497,500, 1956 sunburst Fender Stratocaster, 'Brownie'.

The guitar brought the love song *Layla* to life, and was reportedly one of Clapton's favorites. Its sale set a record high for guitars, and the winning phone bidder remains anonymous. Before the auction began, the buzz was that Clapton would buy back one of his guitars. Now that it's all over, Christie's is neither confirming nor denying the possibility that one of the event's anonymous bidders could have been the double inductee into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame himself.



Bill Swersey, Newsmakers



Beanie Babies

The hottest in Beanies: Bears and Teenies.

So why weren't McDonald's recently released Teenie Beanie International Bears the most crazy promotion ever? It all goes back to the laws of supply and demand, say those closest to the fad. Simply put, more were produced. Plus, people weren't impressed with the quality: the plush isn't soft and the

emblems are merely stickers, not embroidered designs. The set of four — Erin, Britannia, Maple and Glory — is selling for \$10-\$15 in online auctions.

Stamps

They're not licked

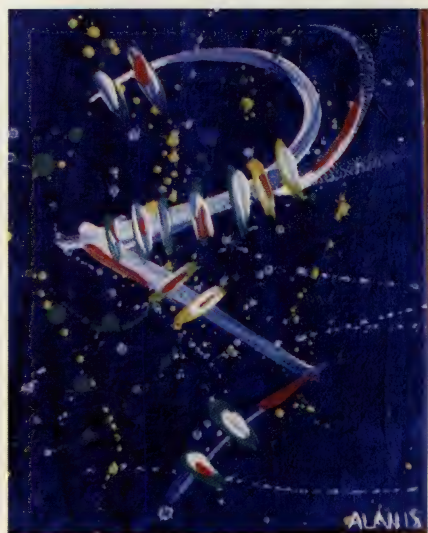
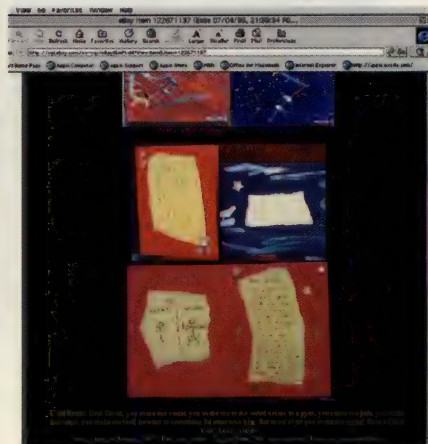
Currently 85 percent of U.S. stamps produced are self-adhesive, as opposed to the traditional lick-and-stick variety. That percentage is likely to continue rising, says philatelic researcher Ken Lawrence. To stamp collectors, this means refining the storage and preservation methods that used to apply to their collections. Now they can look to Lawrence for guidance. In a report commissioned by the Collectors Club of Chicago's



Art

No Sale! \$32,000

Original art by Alanis Morissette. When the singer's personal trainer of late put two paintings she gave him up for bid, along with a homemade birthday card that included a self portrait, no one was buying it. The auction closed on the fourth of July with a fizzle. According to the trainer, Morissette made him the two paintings back before fame hit, as compensation for services rendered. He plans to relist the lot, so watch for this art to reappear — hopefully accompanied by proof of its authenticity this time.



Arthur Salm Foundation, he offers this advice:

- To remove a used, self-adhesive stamp, soak it in hot water for 45 minutes. If it still won't separate from the paper, soak it in an organic solvent such as naphtha or turpentine. This will soften the sticky substance without damaging the stamp.
- To collect mint-condition self-adhesive stamps, the report recommends keeping them on the original backing, removing the adjacent stamps and trimming away all but a small border of the backing.

No Web address here; for a copy of the report, called "Pressure-Sensitive Adhesive United States Stamps," send a 33-cent stamped, addressed No. 10 envelope to The Salm Foundation, 1029 N. Dearborn St., Chicago, IL 60610.

Celebrate the Century

Ever think the World Wide Web and Virtual Reality could leave Interplanetary Exploration without any space? In a nebulous battle to represent "Science and Technology" in the '90s, that's exactly what happened. Along with the other winners, these two will be seen as stamps, due out in April as part of the U.S. Postal Service's Celebrate the Century series. Some of the other exciting outcomes: Cellular Phones and Sport Utility Vehicles beat Coffee and Community Service in the "Lifestyle" category, and Special Olympics creamed Inline Skating and Junior Golf to represent "Sports" in the '90s. More on the 15 winners at www.usps.com.

Chris Cuffaro © 1998 Visages

Sports

Basketball

Of the four major sports, basketball players' autographs are in general the most difficult to obtain. One autograph collector, Ryan Semanko from the Minneapolis area, compiled this list based on his efforts to get signatures from today's players, as published in *Sports Collectors Digest*.



10 NBA players who'll sign for you

- Eddie Jones (\$25)
- Jason Kidd (\$35)
- Antonio McDyess (\$25)
- Erick Strickland (\$15)
- Terrell Brandon (\$20)
- Steve Smith (\$20)
- Grant Hill (\$40)
- Keith Van Horn (\$30)
- Chris Webber (\$35)
- Shareef Abdur-Rahim (\$30)

10 NBA players who probably won't

- Patrick Ewing (\$50)
- John Stockton (\$25)
- Kevin Garnett (\$40)
- Allen Iverson (\$45)
- Scottie Pippen (\$45)
- Alonzo Mourning (\$35)
- Michael Finley (\$25)
- Stephon Marbury (\$30)
- Vlade Divac (\$25)
- Karl Malone (\$35)

Hollywood:

A Collector's Ransom 6

The auction was held by Profiles in History at the Pacific Design Center in West Hollywood, but bidders also chimed in via Amazon.com's LiveBid technology. Costume houses C.R.C. and Eastern Costume, which have been dressing the film industry for more than 20 years, provided much of the loot that was auctioned. (www.profilesinhistory.com)



\$13,000

Yul Brynner's Egyptian helmet from *The Ten Commandments*.

\$55,000

Marilyn Monroe's black cocktail dress with jacket from *The Misfits*.



\$55,000

prop Ten Commandment tablets from *The Ten Commandments*.



Limited editions

Collectors get around

The traditional limit for figurines and other fine art — which is by number of pieces or firing days — just doesn't cut it anymore. Manufacturers are now limiting certain pieces to certain regions of the country, or making them available only at collecting events. The practice is frustrating to many collectors, but it is also effectively raising prices for those items in online auctions. Harmony Kingdom, Columbus, Ohio, and Enesco Corp. with its Cherished Teddies line (Itasca, Ill.), are two of the hottest companies to offer such pieces. In recent years, a special Harmony Kingdom box figurine

has been made available only to attendees of the International Collectible Exposition, which holds two four-day shows per year. "Swap 'n Sell," the piece for the 1999 show season, which came to a close in June, was offered for \$75 and is already selling for more than \$100 at auction. A rare Groucho Marx version is selling for between \$600 and \$700. "Sneak Preview" (originally \$65 at the 1998 shows), is selling at auction for around \$100 as well. The Cherished Teddies figurine offered at this year's shows, "The Company We Keep is a Reflection of Ourselves," was originally \$30. It is selling on eBay for between \$70 and \$80.

www.harmonykingdom.com
www.enesco.com



\$800

"Seinfeld" cast autographed *Rolling Stone* magazine.



\$700

original production cel, *The Jetsons*.

SOLD



\$1.5 million

1939 Best Picture Academy Award for *Gone With the Wind*.

Buyer: Michael Jackson. The sale made up more than half of the Sotheby's auction's \$2.6 million revenue. The balance was made up by a number of big ticket Hollywood items, including the Kramdens' kitchen suite from the *Honeymooners*, which went for \$63,000 to Nick at Nite's TV Land, which plans to tour the set across the country. (www.sothebys.com)



No Sale! Bob Denver needs a star on Hollywood's Walk of Fame, and the sale of Thurston Howell's cash-stashing teddy from *Gilligan's Island* – owned by the Denver family – was supposed to help raise the funds. No such luck, little buddy; the piece, with an estimated value of \$12,000-\$15,000, didn't meet its reserve. If only Mr. Howell had left some of that cash inside his teddy.

Sold! \$25,000, the red shirt Bob Denver wore on his island, as *Gilligan*.



Sports

Hocking Hamm

A major score for soccer and women's sports, the Women's World Cup final attracted record crowds last July. Members of the U.S.'s winning team are being touted as role models for youngsters, an attribution that is rarely attached to any of today's sports figures. One of the favorites on this winning team is Mia Hamm, who has starred in many a television commercial and signed many a souvenir for zealous teenagers. From her jersey to magazines and soccer balls, autographed items are making their way to the online auction block and garnering an amazing amount of interest, as well as high prices.

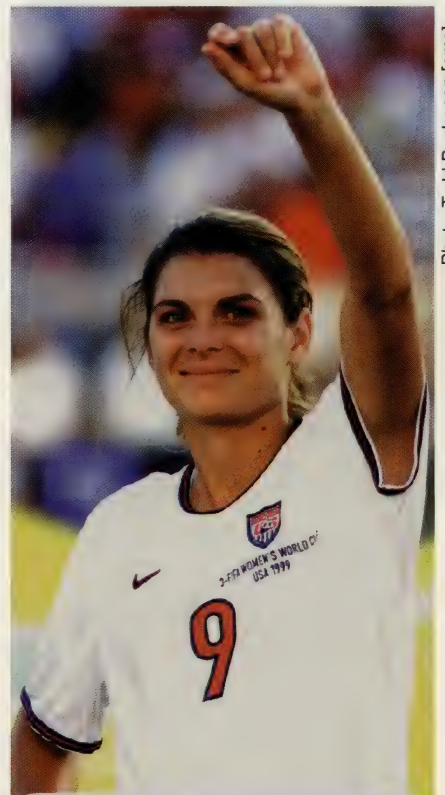


Photo: Todd Buchanan [emis]

Autographed items sold on eBay

Color 8x10 photo	\$75-\$80
Nike soccer ball	\$150-\$200
Authentic jersey	\$350

Stars' stuff

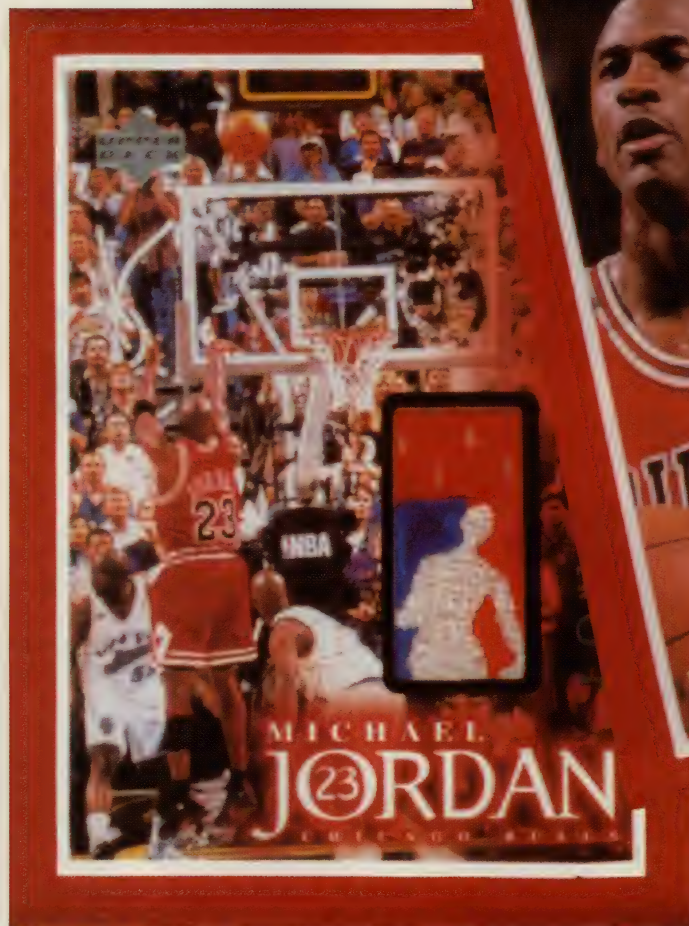
Suitcases

Stars have a lot of baggage, much to the delight of Starwood Hotels and Resorts Worldwide Inc. The hotel giant sold that baggage at a Guernsey's auction — from Steffi Graf's tennis racquet and case (\$2,200), to Madonna's make-up bag (\$550) — to raise more than \$20,000 for UNICEF, Make-A-Wish Foundation and Juvenile Diabetes Foundation International. Also shown is a hand signed guitar case from Chicago (\$1,700), and a tennis racquet, case and photo from British tennis star Tim Henman (\$200). www.guernseys.com



Watches

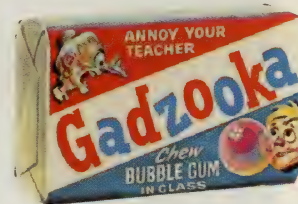
For as much baggage as they have, stars have equally as little time. Especially ever since the Famous Faces Watch Auction by Antiquorum Auctioneers, New York, which raised \$544,200 for 44 different charities. The highest selling single piece was Paul Newman's Rolex, which went for \$39,000. Bob Hope's red, white and blue watch — the one he wore on his Christmas Tours — fetched \$4,000. According to Osvaldo Patrizzi, chairman of Antiquorum, the idea for the auction began when a watch owned by jazz great Duke Ellington brought \$673,000 at auction last year.



Vintage

I feel like a "Poopsie"

If imitation is the purest form of flattery, then Wacky Packages flattered the heck out of the most popular advertising campaigns of decades past. The colorful, collectible cards debuted in the early 1970s from Topps, the company famous for its baseball cards. Diet Rite became "Diet Frite," while Pepsi was Wacky-packed as "Poopsie." Proving Topps really had a sense of humor, a card from the first series of Wacky Packs spoofed its Bazooka gum



SOLD



\$140,000

Watches need not visit famous wrists to garner astronomical prices at auction. In another auction by Antiquorum (www.antiquorum.com), a gentleman's 18K pink gold minute repeater — skeletonized with a sapphire glass back — sold for \$140,000, outshining Paul Newman's timepiece by \$100,000.

—Jack Curtis

Trading Cards

Michael Jordan gives it up

As a bonus for its employees this year, Upper Deck handed over the shirt off Michael Jordan's back.

Pieces of the all-star's jersey were placed on 275 special trading cards, handed out by Upper Deck CEO Richard McWilliam as a special thank you to his staff. The card shows Jordan hitting the game-winning shot in Game 6 of the 1998 NBA finals, which was also the final shot of his Hall of Fame career. "A lot of the reason for the bulk of [Upper Deck's] success is these Game Jersey cards and the Piece of History bat cards," McWilliam told *Sports Collectors Digest*. "This is a symbol of our success." He hopes employees will keep the cards rather than sell them; at least 13 have been seen on eBay.

One offered at the end of June went bidless with a starting price of \$2,500, and another, on July 9, sold for \$2,573.23 with 25 bids. By late July the card was selling for \$3,500-\$5,700; cards with a multi-colored swatch of uniform get higher prices.

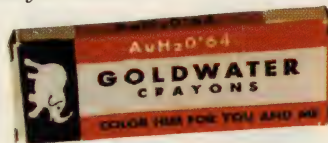
brand ("Gadzooka"). All this goofiness does have a serious side: some series of Wacky Packs (of 16 series made, the first and sixteenth are most valuable) sell for over \$100 at auction, if the cards are in mint condition; individual cards are plentiful in the \$2 to \$10 range. A word of caution: some series were reproduced in the early 1990s, and these cards are worth much less.

— Jon Vena

Chalk it up to crayons

You think of them as something to draw with, maybe even gnaw on, but to collect? Chew on this: a box of Snow White crayons, made by Pressman in the 1950s, can be worth from \$50 to \$65. So can Scrappy crayons, made in the

1940s by Peterson Manufacturing. If you find an old box of Crayolas in your childhood desk, do some investigating; a tan box of 1920s Rubens Crayolas is valued between \$45 and \$65, according to *Warman's Today's Collector*.



Color me political

Used to promote Barry Goldwater's 1964 run for the U.S. presidency, this box of crayons attracts the attention of political memorabilia collectors, in addition to lovers of crayons. The broader appeal leaves it with a higher value, between \$55 and \$75.

Vintage Coca-Cola

"Drink Coca-Cola." It may not seem like the most savvy ad campaign, but it worked for the soft drink more than 100 years ago. For Coke collectors, pinpointing what moment in history a slogan appeared can be the easiest

way to determine the age of an item.

Here are introduction dates for a few of the more famous sayings; for a more complete list, look to

Deborah Goldstein Hill's *Price Guide to Vintage Coca-Cola Collectibles: 1896-1965*.



Serving tray, 1914, \$850

- 1886: Drink Coca-Cola
- 1904: Delicious and Refreshing
- 1905: Coca-Cola Revives and Sustains
- 1913: It Will Satisfy You
- 1917: Three Million a Day
- 1925: Six Million a Day
- 1929: The Pause that Refreshes
- 1948: Where There's Coca-Cola There's Hospitality
- 1970: It's the Real Thing
- 1971: I'd Like to Buy the World a Coke
- 1979: Have a Coke and a Smile
- 1982: Coke is It!
- 1986: Catch the Wave
- 1989: Can't Beat the Feeling
- 1990: Can't Beat the Real Thing
- 1993: Always Coca-Cola

Star Wars

May the force be with your pizza

Given out as game pieces with Pizza Hut, Kentucky Fried Chicken and Taco Bell purchases — Star Wars medallions were also bought and sold as stand-alone items in online auctions. Some bidders wanted a cheap memento of the summer's biggest hit; others had hopes of winning a grand prize. No matter the motivation, an underlying goal for seeking them online seemed to be this: avoid the food, and the repetitive nature in which local joints hand-



ed out the same few pieces over and over. Did anyone win the big prize by haunting online auctions? If anything, the forum made it easy to see which pieces were chronically absent. In hundreds of online auctions, five medallions — one from each winning circle — were nowhere to be found: #10 Shmi Skywalker, #13 Battle Droid, #20 Chancellor Valorum, #4 Yoda and #2 Dautry Dofine. If you have one of the scarce pieces at home collecting dust, get online and buy the rest in that circle; it would be well worth the chump change to own a winning set.

One Star Wars medallion,
#15 (Boss Nass) **30 cents**

Fifty medallions,
still sealed **\$52**

Set of 15 non-winning
medallions **\$10-\$15**

Barbie

Fly away, little butterfly

Heard she was recalled June 6? According to Lisa McKendall, Mattel's director of marketing and public relations, the rumors of a recall were false. It's true that Butterfly Art Barbie will no longer be stocked on store shelves, but only because she reached her scheduled limit, not due to any premature pull. McKendall says the mix-up started when a Florida reporter heard that Generation Girl Barbie would have body art removed from her ankle before she was produced. The resulting story, declaring a halt in production of Butterfly Art Barbie due to parental outcry, was picked up nationwide. Value today: \$7.99.

Like the tattoo on her tummy, Butterfly Art Barbie's pricing flitted to and fro of late on eBay, from the days before her falsely reported June 6 recall, through the frenzy and then back down as the truth seeped out. No recall for this doll, which is worth much closer to \$7.99 than \$171.

June 3	no bids	\$9.99
June 10	8 bids	\$26.51
June 12	6 bids	\$30
June 15	16 bids	\$101
June 15	24 bids	\$76
June 16	38 bids	\$171
June 16	4 bids	\$139.50
June 17	14 bids	\$29.75
June 17	8 bids	\$25
June 18	12 bids	\$20.50
June 18	6 bids	\$15.50



Action figures

Forget the fighting men ...

The most sought-after action figures this year, according to *Toy Shop* columnist John Marshall, will be those based on punk band The Misfits. Scheduled for release on Halloween from 21st Century Toys, the first two action figures capture bassist Jerry Only and guitarist Doyle Wolfgang Von

Frankenstein, down to the spikes and arm-bands; instruments included. Retail price: \$29.99 from www.21stcentury-toys.com



Sports

Sold! \$38, July/Aug. 1999 issue, *Gear Magazine*. Even before it left the newsstand, *Gear's* July/August issue was selling for 10 times its cover price. Why? Brandi Chastain, nude. After the soccer player made the fifth and winning penalty kick for the U.S. in the Women's World Cup, prices for items picturing her, and especially signed by the athlete, soared — as did the number of items available. Signed copies of *USA Soccer* magazine sold for upwards of \$70; a signed copy of *Newsweek's* July 19 issue, which shows Chastain seconds after she kicked the winning goal, sold in an online auction for \$175.

My mom is America's favorite soldier

If G.I. Joe had a demeanor, would it be that of someone you know? To celebrate the action figure's 35th anniversary this year, Hasbro is choosing a real American hero to reap the rewards of his fine personality. Qualified applicants include any man, woman or child who embodies the same basic values as G.I. Joe: honor, courage, respect, service and a love of "good clean fun." The person who is named "The Real-Life Spirit of G.I. Joe" gets to go on a nationwide tour as part of the grand prize package, and 35 semi-finalists will receive a \$1,000 donation to their favorite charities. Can someone in your life fill those army boots? Details are available at www.gijoe.com.

Coins

Susan B. is back

The U.S. Mint is going for gold with a new dollar coin, hoping it will be more illustrious in the eyes of collectors than the Susan B. Anthony coin has been. Featuring Sacagawea, the Shoshone woman who led the 3,000-mile Lewis and Clark expedition, the new coin will be released in early 2000. In the meantime, the U.S. Mint's supply of Susan B. Anthony dollar coins — 847.5 million were minted for circulation from 1979-80 — is running extremely low. The resulting decision to mint 1999 Susan B. Anthony dollar coins has turned collectors' attention toward a face that hasn't garnered much attention throughout its 20-year life. It will be the first time the coin has been minted since it was introduced.



Do not remove this tag under penalty of law:

Without the tag attached, a Beanie Baby's value drops significantly. In fact, you may as well just let your kids play with it (is that legal?).

2,967,161,381:

Number of visitors to Ty Inc.'s Web site (www.ty.com) as of mid-summer.



before

Pulling the strings:

A string attached to the back of the eye and tied under the chin holds the bear's nose down. It can be snipped from the outside, changing the look of the Beanie. Collectors have been known to do this in an effort to make a new Beanie look like an older, more expensive version, or to create an "error" Beanie; error collectors will then pay more, thinking the alteration was a factory mishap.

.4 oz:

Weight of the cottony interior.

Beanie Bared

This month our crackpot staff beat up a Beanie to find the inside scoop on one of the most explosive trends of late. Up next month: *Toy Story* hero, Woody.

Love him or hate him, Beanie Baby creator Ty Warner has attracted the world's attention.

At the height of the Beanie Baby craze, gift shops could be described as no less than battlefields. Grandmas ended tug-of-wars by resorting to fisticuffs, and the madness spilled into the streets with hijackings. Borders crawled with smugglers, courts overflowed with lawsuits and fast food restaurants filled with people who weren't hungry.

Quietly, in the midst of it all, a tie-dyed bear named Peace came to exist. Born on Feb. 1, 1996, the Beanie

bearing that most recognized of symbols quickly became a must-have for a group of collectors that thrived on mayhem.

So, in the spirit of Beanie mania, we beat the stuffing out of him. We needed to know what was inside — just what does it take to create Peace in the midst of the most frantic collecting frenzy since Cabbage Patch Kids?

We dug and we dug. What we came up with is spilled across these pages, amounting to a few meager parts, some interesting facts, a legal loophole and a whole lot of silly, silly situations disguised as serious issues.

.8 oz.:

Weight of the furry exterior of Peace the Beanie Baby.

Eye contact: One way to spot a counterfeit Beanie bear is by staring it down. If it looks away in shame, then it's counterfeit. Okay, it won't look away. But if its face is a little odd-looking, it may be a lesser quality fake that won't fare well at auction, and in general won't be quite as cuddly.

But wait! Older and more valuable Beanie bears (referred to as first generation) also have a different-looking face. Their noses are longer and their eyes are further apart. The early Teddy Beanies are distinguished by color: brown, cranberry, jade, magenta, teal and violet. They're selling for \$1,500-\$2,500.

The biggest bean counter: Armed with a team of lawyers, Beanie Baby manufacturer Ty Inc. cracked down on its collectors in 1998, serving cease and desist orders, injunctions and lawsuits to fans who had started their own Beanie businesses — be they based on Beanie beds, clothes, software, trading cards, or calendars. In order to keep the peace, most just replaced the word "Beanie" in their product title with something like "stuffed toy" or "beanbag." Not quite as catchy, but a lot less expensive than a lawsuit.

The Biggest Beanie: Isn't a Beanie at all. He's Beanie the Lima Being, a seven-foot-tall walking (but not talking) mascot for the town of Lima, Ohio. A town which, incidentally, holds the trademark for the word "Beanie," one of the reasons Ty only claims common law rights to the word in its legal dealings.

154: When a Beanie retires, or is no longer produced by Ty, collectors affectionally refer to it as "extinct." Up to this time, 154 cuddly friends have been laid to rest.

\$850: Truly extinct are Rex the tyrannosaurus, Bronty the brontosaurus and Steg the stegosaurus. They are also retired, commanding between \$700 and \$850 at auction.

1998: A good year to trade your cow for a handful of beans. The average price of Princess the bear last year was \$150. That was before the piece, a Princess Diana tribute, exploded onto store shelves in record numbers, leading to a dramatic price drop. Moo.

\$12,000: Amount paid recently for the #1 Sales Rep. Bear, one of only 253 special Beanies presented to Ty sales representatives.

Follow that Beanie! In 1998 customs agents began tracking the flow of Beanies across the border as closely as they do drugs, seizing loads of fake Beanies and stopping people who were hoarding the real thing in various grey market scandals.

Auction tip: As a buyer, make sure the Beanie you want isn't a second-hand smoker, especially if you're going to give it to your kids. Like books, Beanies pick up that smell and don't let go. Sellers that mention their Beanie comes from a smoke-free home generally attract higher bids.

7: Number of felt spots glued onto the original Lucky the ladybug. Later the bug had 11 spots printed onto the fabric, and for a brief period Lucky was covered with 21 spots. The most rare of the three is the 21-spot version, selling for around \$200 at auction. — D.R.C.

4,467:

Number of beans (P.E. pellets) in this Peace Beanie Baby.

Grudge Match

Bart Simpson vs. O.J.? A real opponent for Al Gore?

We scoured online auction sites to find the winners in seven of our favorite "grudge match categories." Got a Grudge Match of your own? Send it to us at ebayentertainment@krause.com



Gilligan vs. Gillian (Anderson)

After being "cast away," Gilligan was then found 328 times on the auction block, while Gillian "sightings" numbered 267.

Winner: Gilligan

Marijuana vs. Milk

No contest, as Milk (4,067) subdues the wacky weed (72).

Winner: Milk

Heaven vs. Hell

In this classic good-vs.-evil match-up, it was close right down to the end, with Heaven garnering 519 hits to Hell's 451.

Winner: Heaven

Al Gore vs. Mr. Potato Head

If Mr. Potato Head was running against Gore in the 2000 presidential elections, he'd probably come out on top, as he did in the Grudge Match: Mr. Potato Head 52, Al Gore 8.

Winner: Mr. Potato Head



Cindy Crawford vs. Claudia Schiffer

Gentlemen prefer brunettes. Crawford 183, Schiffer 73. (Although there are no losers when it comes to super models!)

Winner: Cindy Crawford

Jim Morrison vs. Van Morrison

While Jim has been dead for about 30 years, he proves too powerful for Van Morrison, winning with 121 auctions to Van's 85.

Winner: Jim Morrison

Bart Simpson vs. O.J. Simpson

Despite obvious handicaps (like *he's not real*), Bart did indeed rush past "The Juice," 128-104.

Winner: Bart Simpson



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